

1-1-2006

## Typographic design for Chinese landscape poem, painting and Taoism

Wujun Wang  
*Iowa State University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/rtd>

---

### Recommended Citation

Wang, Wujun, "Typographic design for Chinese landscape poem, painting and Taoism" (2006).  
*Retrospective Theses and Dissertations*. 19067.  
<https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/rtd/19067>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Iowa State University Capstones, Theses and Dissertations at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Retrospective Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact [digirep@iastate.edu](mailto:digirep@iastate.edu).

# Typographic design for Chinese landscape poem, painting and Taoism

by

**Wujun Wang**

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF FINE ARTS**

Major: Graphic Design

Program of Study Committee:  
Sungyun Ryoo Kang, Major Professor  
Paula J. Curran  
Stephen Pett

Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

2006

Copyright © Wujun Wang, 2006. All rights reserved.

Graduate College  
Iowa State University

This is to certify that the master thesis of  
  
Wujun Wang  
  
has met the thesis requirements of Iowa State University

Signatures have been redacted for privacy

---

## TABLE OF CONTENT

LIST OF FIGURES	v
ABSTRACT	vii
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	5
A. Brief History of Poetry before T'ang Dynasty	5
1. ShiJing	5
2. ChuCi	6
3. Xuan Yan Poetry	7
4. Early Chinese Landscape Poetry	7
5. T'ao Ch'ien	8
6. Hsieh Ling-yün	11
B. Golden Age of Chinese Poetry: T'ang Dynasty	12
1. Brief Introduction of T'ang Dynasty	12
2. Wang Wei, Mountain-Water Poet and Painter in T'ang dynasty	13
C. Taoism	14
1. Major Concepts of Taoism	16
1.1 "No Behavior" (无为)	16
1.2 "Tian Ren He Yi"	17
2. Painting and Taoism	18
3. A Comparison between Tao Mountain-Water Paintings and West Paintings	21
4. How did Chinese Paintings Integrate Tao Principles	23
4.1 <u>Living Quality</u>	23
4.2 <u>Ch'i and "Li"</u>	24
4.3 <u>"Ku Fa" (Bone Structure)</u>	26
4.4 <u>Yin and Yang</u>	27
D. Tao Creativity in Chinese landscape Poetry and Paintings	28
1. Tao Creativity in Chinese Mountain-Water Poetry	28
2. Tao Creativity in Chinese Mountain-Water Painting	29
3. The Transferable Aesthetics between Poetry and Painting	30

E. Concrete Poetry	32
1. Early Visual Poets	32
2. Guillaume Apollinaire	33
3. Concrete Poetry after WWII	33
F. Selected Design Elements and Design Principles	35
1. Design Elements	36
1.1 Dot	36
1.2 Line	36
1.3 Plane/Shape	38
1.4 Texture	40
2. Selected Design Principles	40
2.1 Repetition	40
2.2 Contrast	42
2.3 Space	43
CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY	46
A. Selecting a Mountain-Water Poem	46
B. Selecting a Mountain-Water Painting	49
C. The Relationship between the Selected Poem and Painting	50
D. Developing Reduced Form to an Underlying Structure Based on the Selected Painting	56
E. Typeface Selection	57
CHAPTER 4 PROJECT STUDY	60
A. Study One: Direction	60
B. Study Two: Repetition of Horizontal Lines	69
C. Study Three: Repetition of Vertical Lines	76
D. Study Four: Texture	84
1. Design 1: Text Overlay	87
2. Design 2: Shape Association	92
E. Study Five: “Ku Fa” (Bone Structure)	98
F. Study Six: Yin-Yang	106
CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION	109
1. Future Experiments	110
BIBLIOGRAPHY	113

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Henry Chopin of Paris, <i>Le Poeme Alphabetique</i>	1
Figure 2 John Cage and Raymond Grimaldi, <i>Silence</i>	2
Figure 3 Silk Painting on a Funeral Banner, West Han	19
Figure 4 A Portrait of Li Bai	22
Figure 5 It Is Raining, Guillaume Apollinaire	34
Figure 6 Jan Hamilton Finlay	34
Figure 7 Forsythia, Marry Ellen Solt	35
Figure 8 Visual Grids by Using Dots, Armin Hofmann	37
Figure 9 Abstract Form and Representative Form by Using Dots, Armin Hofmann	37
Figure 10 Railway Poster	39
Figure 11 Three Types of Texture	40
Figure 12 Examples of Principle: Repetitions	43
Figure 13 Draft for a Music Poster	41
Figure 14 Assorted Visual Contrasts	42
Figure 15 Confrontation Study	43
Figure 16 Negative Positive 1	44
Figure 17 Negative Positive 2	44
Figure 18 Illusory Space	45
Figure 19 Poem Calligraphy	48
Figure 20 Poem Word by Word Translation	48
Figure 21 "Early Spring", by Guo Xi, North Song Dynasty	51
Figure 22 Symbol of Yin and Yang	53
Figure 23 Intensification of the Dynamic Action	54
Figure 24 "S" Shape Composition Trend in the Painting "Early Spring".	55
Figure 25 The Painting Difference Before Scanning and After Scanning.	57
Figure 26 The Initial Sketches of Developing Reductive Forms.	58
Figure 27 Helvetica Typeface	59
Figure 28 Each Critical Step on Developing the Reductive Form in the Design Principle of Direction.	61
Figure 29 The Reductive Form for Direction	62
Figure 30 The Initial Text Placement on Component One	64
Figure 31 The Initial Text Placement on Component Two and Part of Three	65
Figure 32 Type Placement on Component Three and Four	66
Figure 33 The Result of Further Adjustments in Type Size, Text Grouping, Rhythm, and Visual Balance.	67
Figure 34 Final Design (Direction)	68
Figure 35 Refining Process for the Reductive Form with Horizontal Lines Repetition.	69
Figure 36 Final Reductive Form for Horizontal Lines	70
Figure 37 Initial Type Placements on Component One, Two, and Three	72
Figure 38 Continuing Text Placements	73
Figure 39 Continuing Type Placements on Component Four	74

Figure 40 The Final Design (Horizontal Lines)	75
Figure 41 Reductive Form Developed from the Selected Painting with Horizontal Lines	77
Figure 42 Final Reductive Form for Vertical Lines	78
Figure 43 Text Placed on Component One. (Vertical lines)	79
Figure 44 Continuing Text Placements on Component Two (Vertical lines)	80
Figure 45 Continuing Text Placements on Component Three (Vertical lines)	81
Figure 46 Continuing Text Placements on Component Four (Vertical lines)	82
Figure 47 The Final Design (Vertical Lines)	83
Figure 48 Reductive Form Developments in Text Overlay	85
Figure 49 The Final Reductive Form for Text Overlay and Shape Association	86
Figure 50 Text Placement on Texture Based on Reductive Form (Design 1) Initial Placement of Text Based on Overall Feeling	88
Figure 51 Adding More Layers to Make Visually Rich	89
Figure 52 One More Layer of the Poem's Text Added on the Component Three	90
Figure 53 The Final Design (Text Overlay)	91
Figure 54 Yang and Yin in Shape Association	92
Figure 55 Initial Text Placement	93
Figure 56 Adding the Text on the Component Two	94
Figure 57 Spreading Out the Text on the Component Three	95
Figure 58 Adjusting Shape Association	96
Figure 59 The Final Design (Shape Association)	97
Figure 60 Reductive Form Refinement in Sequence (Bone-structure)	99
Figure 61 Initial Text Placements on Component One ("Ku Fa")	101
Figure 62 Continuing Text Placements on Component Two ("Ku Fa")	102
Figure 63 Text Placements on Component Three ("Ku Fa")	104
Figure 64 The Final Design ("Ku Fa")	105
Figure 65 Sketches of Developing Reductive Form for Study Six	106
Figure 66 Part of Design (Yin-Yang)	107
Figure 67 Experimental Study of Letterform in the Tao Principle Yin-Yang	108
Figure 68 The Final Designs of Study Two and Study Five	111

## ABSTRACT

Chinese poetry, especially landscape poetry has been translated into English for many years. But rigid language translation could not carry the Tao beauty embedded in the Chinese landscape poetry from Chinese to English. This thesis study is to use western typography design to express Chinese landscape poetry. Chinese landscape painting will be used as an underlying structure upon which type will be placed to create a visual poem. Thus, appreciation of Chinese poetry will not just rely on English translation, but will also be supported by a visual vehicle to aid discovery of the inner beauty that has previously been lost in the translation between Chinese and English.

The purpose of the literature review is to help understand the connection between Chinese landscape poetry and painting in the context of Chinese history and Taoism. It includes short history of Chinese landscape poetry, Taoism, Tao creativity in Chinese landscape poetry and painting, concrete poetry, as well as design elements and principles. After the literature review and methodology in which a list of design processes is given, typographic design experiments are made in project studies in which seven design solutions are analyzed and studied. Each design solution focuses on different design principles such as direction, repetition, shape association, and negative positive space. The result of this thesis study will provide a different perspective for people to understand Chinese landscape poetry and enhance their visual experience through reading poems.



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

After WWII, especially in the 1960s and 1970s, the concrete poetry movement became influential to new typographic designers. “For over a decade, the development of concrete poetry has shown promise of opening up new avenues of thought of typographic designers” (Dair 145). The exhibition called “Between Poetry and Painting” held at the end of 1965 at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London, England pushed the concrete poetry movement into the highest climax. In this exhibition, many typographic artists such as Henri Chopin of Paris (Fig 1), Pedro Xisto of Brazil, and HansJörg Mayer of Germany exhibited their type of works that broke conventions and challenged traditional typographic format.



Figure 1, Henry Chopin of Paris, Le Poeme Alphabetique.  
Image from Design with Type, p.146, Carl Dair, 1967

John Cage, perhaps the most controversial post-modern music composer in American history, once produced another non-linear type of book (Fig 2) that remarkably went beyond the traditions of typography. In his book *Silence*, many typographic elements are used not

only to facilitate reading, but also to satisfy the author's desire to create a "typographic equivalent" of music rhythm. (Carl Dair 145)



Figure 2, John Cage and Raymond Grimala, *Silence*.  
Image from *Design with Type*, p.145, Carl Dair, 1967

Inspired by the exhibition of the concrete poetry held in England and John Cage's cutting edge concept in his new typography, I decided to use Chinese landscape painting as an underlying structure, and focus on western typographic design to keep the spiritual beauty of Chinese landscape poetry that has been lost during translations.

For a longtime, Chinese poetry, especially T'ang poetry has been translated into English. But simple and rigid language translation falls far short of allowing western readers to absorb the

spiritual beauty of Chinese poems, due to the differences between east and west in terms of history, culture, and philosophy. As a result, the spiritual beauty embedded in Chinese poetry is inevitably lost between language translations.

The objective of this thesis study is to use western typography to express Chinese T'ang landscape poetry. Chinese landscape painting will be used as an underlying structure upon which type will be placed to create a visual poem. Thus, appreciation of Chinese poetry will not just rely on English translation but will also be supported by a visual vehicle to aid in the discovery of the spiritual beauty that has previously been lost.

Why can Chinese painting be used as an underlying structure for Chinese landscape poetry? Is there any connection between these two art forms? The connection is Taoism, the philosophy that had been in effect in both Chinese landscape poetry and painting at a fundamental level. As an important part of this thesis research, the relationship between Taoism and both Chinese poetry and painting will be analyzed in the context of Chinese culture and history, in order to produce a meaningful and convincing thesis study.

In the Chapter Methodology, developing reductive forms from a selected landscape painting for poem text placements is important for this study because the reductive forms are not a simple underlying structure simplified from landscape painting, but must be integrated with Tao concepts to make the result more meaningful. Design elements such as dot, line, plane and the necessary design principles have been carefully applied to reflect Tao concepts as well as to create an unusual visual pleasure.

The last section in the Chapter Project Study is the final creative component, typographic poster design, based on the reductive forms developed from a selected landscape painting.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### A. Brief History of Poetry before T'ang Dynasty

Starting from the Zhou dynasty (about 1122- 770 B.C.), poetry became important to the Chinese government. The Duke Chou (周王) (Ch'en 15) traveled all over the country, especially in folk areas, to collect the most popular songs and poems (采风). These collected songs, ballads, and poems were anthologized systematically by governmental historians, musicians, and editors. The songs and poems were harmoniously composed and were intended for musical accompaniment during ceremonies of sacrifice, national conventions, official banquets, and school and military affairs. "Poetry in this period was not a special literary task for scholars, but a means of expression common to both sexes of all classes" (Kiang xxi-xxii).

Poetry represents the earliest literature of China and mostly reflects the Chinese oral tradition and folk music. The books ShiJing (诗经), also called Shih Ching, and ChuCi also called Ch'u Tz'u (楚辞) (*Ch'u Elegies*, Ch'en, p48) were considered the two earliest classic collections of Chinese poetry.

#### 1. ShiJing (诗经)

ShiJing is the earliest song and poem anthology in Chinese literary history. It may translate as the "Book of Poetry" or "Book of Song" (Yip 44) and was edited by Confucius.

Arranged as one of the five Confucian classics, this anthology is a selection of 305 poems

from the Zhou Dynasty (11th century B.C.) to the middle of the Spring and Autumn Annual period (春秋, 6th century B.C.). According to different applications and occasions, poems or songs in the anthology are classified under three different sections: “Wind,” “Elegance,” and “Praise.” The “Wind” section is the collection of folk ballads from different areas in China during the West Zhou dynasty. “Elegance” is the poetry collection that was harmonized with music, serving as songs for the empire of Zhou. The “Praise” section, then, is the section in which songs were applied for ceremonies of sacrifice (Yip 44).

## 2. *ChuCi* or Ch’u Tz’u(楚辞)

In contrast to *ShiJing*, *ChuCi* is the collection of poems from southern China. It is said that Qu Yuan, the first poet known by name, edited this collection. *ChuCi* focuses on local cultures and featured strong religious elements. The religion-driven culture in *ChuCi* is known for its descriptions of magic and the Heaven Empire full of gods and goddess. Today, they are mostly represented by different rivers and mountains in the Chu area where the poems were collected. The Chu area is known today as the Hunan and HuBei provinces in China (Yip 72).

Chinese classical poems were usually composed of lines of three or four characters, or words, in which every other line rhymed. During the years of emperor Wu (140-87 B.C.) of the West Han dynasty, a new type of poetry called Fu (赋), was introduced, and derived from this type, five-character and seven-character poems became popular. The emperor Wu himself was an excellent poet; in fact, he invented the seven-character poem. Five-character

and seven-character poems were later called ancient or ruled-format poems. All poetry before the T'ang dynasty was in this ruled format (Kiang xxii).

### **3. Xuan Yan Poetry: The Predecessor of Chinese Mountain -Water Poetry**

After the Han dynasty, China was subjected to political turmoil and tranquility during Three Kingdoms time (220-280 A.D.). The Si Ma families seized power and established West Tsin after unifying the Three Kingdoms. (265-316 A.D.) There were frequent occurrences of civil war at this time. Many scholars during this chaotic period were executed for holding unapproved political and social beliefs. In such horrible times, the position of the Chinese scholar was fraught with difficulty and danger. In order to avoid the risks of serving the government, many scholars gradually gave up Confucianism, which promoted governmental careers, and switched their philosophy to Taoism. (Ch'en 164) Taoism during this time period was called the "Three Mysteries" or "Three Xuan" and was a philosophy that focused on "no behavior," "void," "leisure," and "nature." Correspondingly, Chinese poetry, as the main vehicle of Chinese literature, began to use Lao Zhuang's (Lao Tzu & Zhuang Tzu) ideas and Taoism for literary subject matter. The poetry during this time was called Xuan Yan poetry (玄言诗) (Zheng Feng 112). It is the poetry that describes unknowns such as the universe, nature, and human life during ancient times.

### **4. Early Chinese Landscape Poetry**

In the early 4th century (316 A.D.), the West Tsin Empire (西晋) was invaded and seized by the barbarian migrations. (Ch'en 169) In order to avoid the chaos of war, most Chinese



scholars and intellectuals moved to southeastern China with the temporary empire, later called East Tsin (东晋) (317- 420 A.D.). Southeastern China is a beautiful land rich with mountains, woods, lakes, and rivers. Compared with scattered and war-destroyed northern China, the sudden peaceful and beautiful landscape of southern China naturally inspired the poetry of these scholars. Mountains and water, therefore, became major subjects in poetry. Due to the political corruption of the temporary empire, however, many scholars and government officers were pessimistic about their political futures. Many of them resigned government positions and returned to the subject of nature to avoid the risk of having to serve the government. They enjoyed the ideas of Taoism and attached their spirits to the natural world. T'ao Ch'ien is one of famous poet among these scholars.

## 5. T'ao Ch'ien

The great scholar famous for his Mountain-Water poetry during East Tsin, is T'ao Ch'ien also known as T'ao Yüan-ming (365-427 A.D.). T'ao Ch'ien was born into a great official family during the East Tsin time. Pursuant to his family's expectations, T'ao Ch'ien took several positions in which he served as a governmental official, but he suffered difficulties and disappointments. After fruitless struggling, T'ao Ch'ien gave up superficial pursuits, resigned his position, and returned to nature to seek satisfaction both as man and as poet (Ch'en, p. 170-173). With only a little house, a farm, and a reading room, T'ao Ch'ien chose this simple life as a way to avoid corrupt social reality. David Hinton states in his book Mountain Home: "This was not a romantic return to the bucolic but to a life in which the spiritual ecology of Tzn-Jan (自然) was the very texture of every-day experience" (6).



T'ao Ch'ien's Mountain-Water poems were obviously influenced by Taoism. One of the unique Tao principles, "Wu Wei," promotes non-contention, non-desire, non-struggle, non-aggressiveness, and non-progress. "Wu Wei" teaches a person to be compatible with the way of nature since human life and nature, according to Tao, are both rooted from universal order (law) -Tao.

One of T'ao Ch'ien's poems cited in Mountain Home illustrates the influence of Taoism.

### Home Again Among Fields and Gardens

Nothing like all the others, even as a child,  
Rooted in such love for hills and mountains,

I stumbled into their net of dust, that one  
departure a blunder lasting thirteen years.

But a tethered bird longs for its old forest,  
And a pond fish its deep waters--- so now,

My southern outlands cleared, I nurture  
Simplicity among these fields and gardens,

Home again. I've got nearly two acres there,  
And four or five rooms in this thatch hut,

Elms and willows shading the eaves in back,  
And in front, peach and plum spread wide.

Will ages lost across mist-and haze distances,  
Kitchen smoke drifting wide-open country.

Dogs bark deep among back roads out there,  
And roosters crow from mulberry treetops.

No confusion within these gates, no dust,  
My empty home harbors idleness to spare.

Back again: after so long caged in that trap  
I've returned to occurrence coming of itself.

(cite the poem)

Living as a reclusive farmer, T'ao Ch'ien's simple life purified his intelligence and knowledge. He returned to his farm and "became a legendary ideal that virtually all later poets and intellectuals revered, and the deeper reason for this is found in the final words of T'ao's poem: 'occurrence coming of itself'" (Hinton, xv). It is all about nature, according to David Hinton, this is not the nature of western culture; rather it is "about returning to a life in which the perpetual unfolding of Lao Tzu's organic cosmology is the very texture of daily experience" (xv).

Living in the wilds of nature is, as Hinton states, a “spiritual fulfilling life in which one inhabits that wilderness cosmology in the most immediate day to day life” (6). According to Hinton, it seems T’ao Ch’ien was isolating himself. However, it does not simply mean being away, but being in an “ideal situation” to purify his soul, his mind, and his intelligence in a simple environment. Having a small house and a piece of farmland, communicating with nature, studying calligraphy, composing poems, and drinking wine are all cooperated with Taoism (6).

#### **6. Hsieh Ling-yün (385-433 A.D.)**

Hsieh Ling-yün was born into a noble, perhaps one of most powerful families in the Tsin dynasty. Therefore, he was inherently engaged in the “turbulent political world for decades” (20). However, according to Hinton, he was also a “mountain recluse at heart” (20) as his family believed in the Taoism that prevailed during the Tsin and Wei dynasty. Once Hsieh Ling-yün became frustrated with a political future that could not fulfill his ambitions, he returned to the wilderness to satisfy his spiritual needs.

Hsieh’s mountain-water poems are deeply influenced by Xuan Yan poetry which only explored Tao theory, which was considered the rudiment of Chinese landscape poetry. However, instead of following the Xuan Yan poetry format (the poems only explored Tao theory, which was considered the rudiment of Chinese landscape poetry), which is fairly dry and dull, Hsieh Ling-yün began to compose poems featuring more descriptive narratives of beautiful landscapes. His poems made great progress in breaking the exclusive Xuan Yan format. Hinton believes that Hsieh’s landscape poems, like Chinese mountain-river paintings,

imply “nonbeing mirroring the whole” (20). In Hsieh’s landscape poems, the combination of human and nature creates spiritual aesthetics that evoke the poetic beauty. David Hinton describes it as that “locating human consciousness in its primal relation to the Cosmos,” Hsieh’s mountain water poetry infused himself with a beautiful landscape to inspire a poetic joy (20-21).

## **B. The Golden Age of Chinese Poetry: T’ang Dynasty (唐朝)**

### **1. Brief Introduction of T’ang Dynasty**

As many dynasties in Chinese history had their own marks of distinction, the T’ang Dynasty was entitled “The Golden Age of Poetry” (Kiang xxiii). In the history of Chinese poetry, the T’ang dynasty (618-906 A.D.) is considered an era of unparalleled brilliance. There was no other such time period in Chinese history in which China was so rich and brilliant in many fields such as politics, economics, social civilization, art, and literature. A very highly developed capital city called Chang An became a world metropolis diffusing Chinese cultures to many foreign countries (Wu 24). In 630 A.D., the first university in the world was established in Chan An city by T’ang Tai-Zong. A fair number of students including Jews and Moslems from more than twenty different countries came to study here (Wu 22). This highly developed civilization made Chang An a world center that possessed cultural prosperity. Paris, France, in that time period, as John C. H Wu explains “was but an enlarged village on the banks of the Seine, London but a fort beside a muddy stream, and Berlin not yet dreamed of”. (Wu 17) During the T’ang dynasty, poetry was regarded as the literature

component for all social ranks. All people from different social ranks, were writing poetry, especially these scholars, were particularly excellent at it. During the brilliant dynasty, T'ang poetry reached the highest level ever achieved by any dynasty.

## **2. Wang Wei—Mountain-Water Poet and Painter in T'ang Dynasty**

The Golden T'ang created many poets including Li Bo, Tu Fu, and Wang Wei. These three poets are individually called the Genie, the Sage, and the Buddha of Chinese poetry (Kiang xxiv). Each of them made an outstanding contribution to T'ang poetry by his everlasting, masterful verses. In terms of the poet influenced by Taoism, Wang Wei is the most famous poet to refer to. In his poetry, we find his Taoism seeking.

Beside incense tapers I read my Book of Tao.

How quickly I have experienced the deep peace born of quietness!

This contemplative life blesses on with abundance of leisure...

Why did you think so seriously of returning?

This worldly life with all its affairs is empty and void.

(Calvin and Walmsley, 41-42)

Wang Wei was not only a famous poet but “a musician, doctor and official – and lived when the most brilliant cultural period in Chinese history was at its crest” (Calvin and Walmsley 15). However, the most important recognition of Wang Wei is that he is considered the originator of Chinese classic landscape ink painting, scholar painting, or mountain-water painting. In his mountain-water paintings, Wang Wei subtly embedded Taoism into his painting techniques. Spontaneous ink splashes were applied to discover the spiritual beauty

between him and nature. This painting technique is also translated as the “broken ink” style. It consists mainly of controlling the amount and density of the ink on the brush and in broadening the strokes in order to separate the ink line into “fibers” (Calvin and Walmsley 103). Not only did this painting technique contain elements of Taoism, but his color palette was also influenced by Tao Te Ching, the bible of Taoism. Instead of using fresh and decorative colors, Wang Wei rather used simple black ink. The simplicity of color application reflects Wang Wei’s aesthetic opinion influenced by Taoism. “Wang mixed his colours with that mystical flow of spirit so prevalent in Taoism and Buddhism. His tendency towards replacing the fashionable intense colours with plain black and white may have sprung from lines in the ‘Tao Te Ching,’ the bible of Taoism. (Calvin and Walmsley 98)

The five colours dazzles they eye...

Give the people simplicity to look at ...”

(Calvin and Walmsley 98)

Wang Wei’s painting and art theory awakened a new time for Chinese painting. As many Chinese authorities acknowledge, Wang Wei was not only the greatest landscape painter of the Tang Dynasty, but of all dynasties (Calvin and Walmsley 95). In successive dynasties, like the North Song dynasty, for example, many mountain-water painters were influenced by Wang Wei’s everlasting masterpieces and painting skills.

### **C. Taoism**

Many Westerners might not be familiar with the term, Tao. Simply translated into English, it may be called “the way” (Graham 13). It could be understood as the “way of man’s



cooperation with the course or trend of the natural world.” (Watts xiv) The Tao developed systematically in early Chinese history and became one of the three major Chinese philosophies: Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism. It has been fundamentally infiltrated into Chinese tradition for almost 5,000 years. If ancient Greek philosophy was considered a foundation of western civilization, then Taoism is to Chinese culture what Aristotelian philosophy is to western civilization. However, the Tao and its meaning are not a mystery, nor is it unique to Eastern culture anymore. Much attention has been paid by western scholars to decipher Tao philosophy. German philosopher George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831A.D.) once delivered a lecture discussing Chinese philosophies, including Taoism. Hegel said: “The nameless Tao is the beginning of Heaven and Earth; with a name Tao is the Mother of the Universe (All Things).... To the Chinese what is highest, the origin of things is nothingness, emptiness, the altogether undermined, the abstract universal, and this is also called Tao...”(Chang 4).

“Tao,” as a term, first appeared in the earliest Chinese Tao book, the Tao Te Ching (道德经) written by Lao Tzu. In Chapter 1 of Tao section, it is stated: “As for the Way, the Way that can be spoken of is not the constant Way; as for the names, the name that can be named is not the constant name” (Henricks 53). This phrase implies that there is no name we can simply address for the Tao. The Tao is related to the whole universe, and humans cannot judge it but can only follow it. It is far beyond the words we use every day. The name we give to an object (a thing) is just what humans created for the purpose of communication and is not the reality of the object (the thing) itself. In the book the Tao Te Ching, “The Way” is what Lao Tzu called the ultimate reality. “For Lao Tzu, the way (Tao) is that reality, or that

level of reality, that existed prior to and gave rise to all other things, the physical universe (heaven and earth), and all things in it, what the Chinese call the “ten thousand things” (Henricks xviii).

## 1. Major Concepts of Taoism

### 1.1 “No Behavior” (无为)

The book the Tao Te Ching conveys Tao concepts and teaches people how to stay in balance and harmony. One of the most important concepts in this book is that of “No Behavior.”

This concept teaches people to live in a simple way in order to avoid danger and harm. For example, in Chapter 22 of the Te-Tao Ching (Henricks calls Tao Te Ching as Te-Tao Ching),

Lao Tzu states: “When you have little, you will attend much; with much, you will be confused” (Henricks 75). It is not easy to understand Tao for its abstract meaning. However, when one compares her/his innocent childhood life, during which life was probably much simpler, with the complicated confusion of middle age, one will see the truth behind the concept. This is the key to understanding why Lao Tzu suggests people “return to the way” by living with “fewer possessions.” (Henricks xxii)

The “No Behavior” concept in Taoism indeed affected many Chinese scholars’ life attitudes, especially during the Tsin and Wei time periods, which were full of social and political problems. Scholars, such as T’ao Ch’ien and Juan Chi (one of the Seven Worthies), chose to live in secluded places to avoid the risk of having to serve the government. They felt free and spiritually fulfilled by their leisurely lifestyle (Ch’en 164).



At the fundamental level, “No Behavior” encourages people to become what they are in nature. It weakens subjectivity in humans, therefore, blending the differences between subjectivity of humans and objectivity of environment. As a result, “No behavior” blurs the line between man and nature by minimizing humans’ subjectivity. Yet, it is the transformation and ambiguity between man and nature that influenced the Chinese aesthetics of creativity, especially in poetry, painting, and calligraphy.

### **1.2 “Tian Ren He Yi” (interfusion of man and nature)**

If “No Behavior” in Tao Te Ching teaches a negative life attitude, less behavior, and less aggressiveness, then Zhuang Tzu, one of the founders of Taoism, took this one step further. He promoted “interfusion of man and nature” as a method to reach the state of harmony. The following story describes what “interfusion of man and nature” is:

Last night Zhuang Tzu dreamt he was a butterfly. Spirits soaring, he was a butterfly, and did not know about Zhou (first name of Zhuang Tzu). When all of a sudden he awoke, he was Zhou with all his wits about him. He did not know whether he was Zhou who dreams he is a butterfly or a butterfly who dreams he is Zhou. (Li 28)

This story shows that Zhuang Tzu (alternate name: Zhuang Zhou) could be the butterfly and the butterfly could be Zhuang Tzu. “He might never know which but, in either case, he would be the same individual” (Li 28). This transmission between subjectivity (Zhuang Tzu) and objectivity (butterfly) influenced the Chinese scholar’s artistic creation. When human subjectivity is interfused with the objectivity of surroundings, subjectivity will no longer be restricted. The human will, during the interfusion process, can be set free, and people can enjoy the spiritual fulfillment from such free will. This Taoist story literally reveals the process of interfusion. Can the interfusion between subjectivity and objectivity generate

spiritual fulfillment and aesthetic beauty? Let's take music as an example to prove this point. Many people like jazz music. When they listen to jazz and truly enjoy the rhythm of the music, their bodies start weaving along with the music. When a saxophone player is playing the instrument, his/her body often moves beautifully, following the resonance of the music he/she is playing. At this moment, the player is experiencing the process of interfusion between him/herself and the music. In such way, he/she is enjoying the music in his/her deep soul and experiencing the spiritual pleasure.

In Chinese Mountain-Water poetry and painting, the concept of interfusion between subjectivity and objectivity was embedded for the seeking of peace and harmony. As a saxophone player interfuses him/herself into music, Chinese scholars and painters, by traveling between mountains and waters, interfused themselves with beautiful landscapes to experience inner joy. Jacques Maritain once described this process of the inner principle of dynamic harmony seized upon by Chinese contemplative artists in a lecture during the spring of 1952 at the National Gallery of Art in Washington as a "sort of interpenetration between Nature and Man." He said: "When the artist reveals the reality concealed in things, he sets it free and, in turn, he liberates and purifies himself. This invisible process, fundamental to Chinese art, is the action of Tao" (Chang 8).

## **2. Painting and Taoism**

It was not until the Qin (秦, 221-207 B.C.) and Han time periods (汉, 206B.C. – 25A.D.) that painting became independent and played a role as a major art medium. Many silk paintings appearing during the Warring State time revealed their status as an independent art

form. After the Qin and Han periods, the Wei dynasty (220-264 A.D.), the Tsin dynasty (265-419 A.D.), and the Southern and Northern dynasty (420-589 A.D.) followed. During these time periods, Taoism began to flourish. As a result, Chinese literature became dominated by Taoism and was called Mountain-Water literature. Yet painting did not seem to parallel Chinese literature in terms of adopting Mountain-Water as a subject matter because Mountain-Water was still secondary to human figures, simply serving as a background in paintings. However, this does not mean that Chinese paintings were far from the influence of Taoism. As a matter fact, many Tao symbols such as “Zhuque” (sun bird) and “Xuanwu” (turtle) were used as background figures during this time period (Fig 3).



Figure 3, Silk painting on a funeral banner, West Han. Image from A History of Chinese Painting, Zhang Anzi, translated by Dun J. Li, p25, 1992.

It was not until the T'ang dynasty (618-716 A.D.) that Mountain-Water as an independent subject first appeared in Chinese paintings. Many outstanding landscape painters created their brilliant masterpieces during Mountain-Water painting history. One of most representative painters was Wang Wei. As mentioned previously, he is not only a talented Mountain-Water poet with brilliant literary achievements, but also a creative painter who paved the way for the Chinese Mountain-Water painting school and established landscape art in its own right (Rowley 6). Wang Wei explored new Chinese painting techniques and was the first one who used the "splashing ink" skill to express abstract spiritual beauty. His painting theory and techniques dominated Chinese painting and led it into a new era. Torao Miyagawa described in his book Chinese Painting that "with Wang Wei's masterful contribution to the vocabulary of ink-painting techniques, the Tang dynasty saw the birth of a new awareness of painting as a means of expressing the inner spirit of the individual artist" (Miyagawa 11). Due to Wang Wei's contribution to Mountain-Water painting, he was recognized as the ancestor who opened the Chinese Mountain-Water painting school; numerous well-known painters in the North Song dynasty (960-1127A.D.) continued to study Wang Wei's painting style.

As the art of poetry matured during the Tang dynasty, Chinese Mountain-Water paintings flourished in the North Song Dynasty. It was a time in which "painters were speculating between Tao and art" (Rowley 6). One of the representative painters was Guo Xi, who followed Taoist principles to create "ideal landscape painting." His masterpiece, *Early Spring*, stands out as a monument to Chinese painting, the culmination of all landscape painting trends since the mid-T'ang dynasty (Miyagawa 123).

### 3. A Comparison between Tao Mountain Water Paintings and Western Paintings

To better understand the Tao Mountain-Water painting, a comparison between Tao Mountain-Water paintings and Western paintings would be helpful.

In Western painting, Greek philosophy, derived from Aristotle, played a major role in leading Western art in a totally different or even opposite direction to that of Chinese art. The Greeks believed that beauty came from the precise proportion of the subject matter. The anatomical analysis of subject matter and the technique that can accurately reproduce the subject became the primary value in ancient Western paintings. Therefore, the ideal imitation of the details of natural form gradually became what artists sought to achieve. Western painting, the form contains a great deal of information. Perfect painting techniques and accurate capture of light and shadow attract viewer's attention. As a result, the content of the painting become secondary and often neglected. Michael Sullivan gives an example in his book Symbol of Eternity. He takes the masterpiece *Rape of the Daughters of Leucippus* by Rubens as an example. When people appreciate this painting, they are satisfied with the precise representation, perfect proportion, and exquisite brush touches, whereas the content of the painting seems secondary to be noticed (Sullivan 2).

In Chinese painting, revealing the inner spirit was taken as the most important principle. Catching the spirit that activates a living quality of a subject matter was considered the highest artistic achievement. The portrait painting, *A Portrait of Li Bai* by Liang Kai (Song period) would be a good example (Fig 4).

In this painting, the physical proportion of the figure was not appreciated by the Chinese painter. Catching the spirit of figure means much more than representing a physically



Figure 4, A Portrait of Li Bai, image from A History of Chinese Painting, p. 131, Zhang Anzi, translated by Dun J. Li, 1992.

accurate form. Form and content are always considered as a whole. As Sullivan said “of course, but he (a traditional Chinese critic) too would have insisted on the unity of form and content, for he saw things whole”(Sullivan 2). The great East Tsin painter Ku K’ai-chih (344–406 A.D.) once said:

Form are used to reveal the spirit; when it is lost, one deviates from the principle of discarding the fishing net and the snare and the purpose of painting is missing... Even though there be light and shade in the painting, nothing is better than to communicate with its spirit when one gazes at it. (Chang 208)

The painting that only catches the likeness of physical form is spiritually dead. The art that concentrates on imitating exterior form was deemed low and vulgar.



#### **4. How Did Chinese Paintings Integrate Tao Principles**

In Chinese history, landscape painting was one of Four Equipments (qin, qi, poetry/calligraphy, and painting) that Chinese scholars had to learn in order to be recognized. Most landscape painters are not just painters. They are, as Michael Sullivan states, more or less philosophers “The educated Chinese painter was, unlike his European counterpart, never just a painter. He was something of a philosopher, too” (Sullivan 11).

Because of the Tao’s inherent concepts that reveal the law of nature and its profound philosophical meaning that guides human life into an agreeable state, in landscape painting, the Tao is highly respected and applied to reveal the truth, to catch the inner spirit. This was especially the case during the Song dynasty. On some level, the line between Chinese painting and Taoism was even blurred and almost became a single entity. Hui Zong (or Hui Tsung, the emperor of the Northern Song dynasty) once said that when “one approaches the wonderful; one knows not whether art is Tao or Tao is art” (Rowley 5). The Tao and painting are so inherently connected that when a painter is painting a landscape, you cannot not tell whether he is making a painting or studying Tao. Wu Chen, known as Mei-hua Tao-Jen (the Taoist of Plum Blossoms) is a Tao painter during fourteen century. He once said, “When I begin to paint, I do not know that I am painting; I entirely forget that it is myself who holds the brush”(Chang 204).

##### **4.1 Living Quality**

According to the Tao, all things in the universe are not inanimate but have living qualities. The Tao holds that there is only one power dominating and infiltrating the universe,

generated by a pair of opposite elements such as Yin and Yang, mountain and water, male and female. This concept of Tao is the exact key or touchstone necessary to understand Chinese ink paintings. During a painting process, the artist observes nature in a Taoist manner. For the artist's eye in Taoism, a tree is not static but a living life form that grows. A rock is not a piece of still matter but has Ch'i (breath), which carries a living quality. A mountain is not just a pile of soil but has its own life and spirit (Rowley 5). Therefore, when appreciating Chinese ink paintings, a viewer can sense that the Chinese painters were revealing a living quality of their subject.

#### **4.2 "Ch'i" (气) and "Li" (理)**

Ch'i can sometimes be understood as "air." In Chinese painting, Ch'i is the most direct application of the Tao. If Ch'i is captured in a painting, then the painting becomes alive, just like a human needs air to breathe. Ch'i brings life to the painting; without it, "no amount of likeness, embellishment, skills or even genius could save the work from lifelessness" (Rowley 34). By the time of Song, Ch'i appeared in the painting book Six Essentials. According to George Rowley, it can be understood as a "life movement" or "spirit resonance."

"Li" is the universal principle behind all things. According to Taoism, it is the prefixed path that everything follows. Fish can swim only in water; birds can fly only in the sky. This living path or pattern is named "Li." It is the way of nature. It also can be understood as a universal operation.



In Greek philosophy, according to Rowley, ideas are concerned with universal principles, too. But “Li” is more abstract than Greek ideas. The living quality in Greek ideas is based on plastic form; whereas “Li”, like nature, is not in this form but in operation. It suggests non-physical but more inner movement. In Principles of Chinese Painting, a very good example effectively illustrates the difference between Greek ideas and the Chinese “Li” concept “A knife consists of a handle and blade, while its function is to cut. Although these two aspects were recognized both in the east and the west, the Greeks would have emphasized the generic type of knife as a handle-blade idea, while the Chinese would have concentrated more upon its cutting quality” (35).

Zhuang Tzu, as one of the founders of Taoism, once told a story about Cook Ding, who was famous for his excellent skill in cutting oxen without damaging the knife. In the story, the Cook says:

When I first began to cut oxen, what I saw was nothing but a whole oxen. After three years, I no longer saw whole oxen. . . In accord with the natural grain, I slice at the great crevices, lead the blade through the great cavities. Following its inherent structure, I never encounter the slightest obstacle even where the veins and arteries come together or where the ligaments and tendons join, much less from obvious big bones. A good cook changes his cleaver once a year because he chops. An ordinary cook changes his cleaver once a month because he hacks. Now I’ve been using my cleaver for nineteen years and have cut up thousands of oxen with it. But the blade is still as fresh as though it had just come from the grindstone. Between the joints there are spaces, but the edge of the blade has no thickness. Since I am inserting something without any thickness into an empty space, there will certainly be lots of room for the blade to play around in. That’s why the blade is still as fresh as though it had just come from the grindstones. (Li 16)

This story shows us that harmony comes from a proper way. Specifically, the “way” here is “Li.” “Li” is the path, the principle, and the proper way to reveal the inner truth. In this

story, following the way of cutting oxen, the blade would not be hurt. Likewise, in Chinese painting, following the way of being proper, the living quality will be captured.

### 4.3 “Ku Fa”(骨法)

“Ku Fa” is important but is a more technique-related concept in Chinese painting. It can be understood as “bone- means” (Rowley 36). However, it is not a physical study in terms of anatomy. It is a particular brush structure that conveys the “Ch’i” (气) by following “Li” (理). The brush structure is a very abstract concept. There is not an obvious sample to copy and can only be sensed based on “Li.” To sense “Ku Fa” involves much more than intuition because “Ku Fa” comes from the artist’s observation. For Western artists, this observation may fall into research into physical characteristics such as size, weight, and color scale. But for Chinese artists, the difference is that instead of physical characteristics, they focused their observation on the inner structure. On this point, “Ku Fa” is similar to German abstract expressionism. Both tried to paint something deeper under skin. Rowley once explained Chinese “Ku Fa” from a Western point of view:

We in the west have depended upon the qualities of solidity and weight to reinforce plastic form, and unity owes much to the physical integration of the solid. To our eyes a Chinese form often seems reduced to a kind of ideographic skeleton. A few brush strokes may suggest volume but they certainly fail to convey the through and through sculptural mass of modeled form. (37)

Once this observation was fully digested, the Chinese painter started to paint instead what was in his/her eyes but what was in his/her mind. This process of digestion is quite critical to finding “Li”. With it, the painting ends up more like an abstract and expressive series of brush strokes, with little physical imitation.

#### 4.4 Yin and Yang

Large empty spaces are one of the obvious characteristics of Chinese painting. It is a direct application of the Tao in Chinese painting. In Chinese painting, the large empty space, that which is left out, challenges traditional Western aesthetic values. People from western culture are accustomed to measuring an actual existence rather than an empty void. For example, the sky for Westerner is usually considered a filled space, rather than a vehicle for carrying the infinite (Rowley 71).

In Chinese painting, especially during the Song dynasty, large amounts of empty space suggest a “mystery of emptiness.” Rowley provides a fine example, which may give the reader a better visual of the different treatment of sky in Chinese painting compared to Dutch paintings. He says “Far from being a void, a typical Dutch sky is a painting of tangible cloud forms, defining a defined space. The clouds in Chinese painting belong to the mountains and most of the skies are empty voids” (Rowley 71).

However, the emptiness never exists by itself. It exists because of solidness. According to Chinese painting theory, there is a proverb that proclaims “learn white to define black,” which means by controlling empty space one can define inked solid area. It is a direct application of the Taoist concept of Yin (emptiness) and Yang (filling). In this case, emptiness in Chinese painting is not still. It interacts with solidness to become “alive.”

## **D. Tao Creativity in Chinese Landscape Poetry and Paintings**

### **1. Tao Creativity in Chinese Mountain-Water Poetry**

We already know that the interfusion between the object and the subject is the ontology of Taoism. This interfusion experience in Chinese poetry has been analyzed by Chang Chung-Yuan. Chang describes the interfusion experience in Chinese poetry as “non-differentiated, non-conceptual, and non-expressible primordial innocence.” Chang further states, “When nature’s reality stirs the poet’s primordial innocence to consciousness, he experiences a pure beauty, which is free and luminous” (Chang 169).

Therefore, in order to experience the joy of pure beauty, ancient Chinese poets underwent the interfusion between the object (nature) and subject (poets), to gain “non-expressible primordial innocence.” This may explain why Chinese poets and scholars traversed mountains and rivers to seek the primordial innocence of the traveling experience. Setting themselves in nature provided a quiet and non-disturbing landscape to allow them to become part of nature and interfuse with the natural environment, therefore generating an “inner joy” or pure beauty derived from the process of becoming part of nature. The “inner joy” is the creation of such interfusion and can only be sensed by communicating with the natural environment. Yet, ordinary people rarely feel such joy. According to Chang, “inner joy” is “derived from a subjective interfusion with the objective reality of things.” (Chang 170) Only the Chinese poets who can reach higher intuition from the interfusion can feel such inner joy. An example from Chang demonstrates what the inner joy is. The poem written by Ch’eng Hao, it reads:

*Near the middle of the day,  
 when clouds are thin and the breeze is light,  
 I stroll along the river,  
 passing the willows and the blooming trees.  
 People of the day do not understand my joy;  
 They will say that I am lofting like an idle young man.*  
 (Chang 170)

In this poem, we can see that “the people of the day” viewed the poet as a lofting, idle young man and could not understand the joy that the poet felt from the intuition of interfusing himself with nature. Ordinary people were unable to sense the “inner joy” because they were attracted by the beauty from superficial observation. Their eyes stayed on the surface of nature without deeply communicating with it. Their hearts went far away from nature. While the poet was enjoying his “inner joy” by experiencing nature, he interfused himself with nature and turned himself into a part of it. His mind was purified, and all things in nature became identical in the poet’s eyes because he penetrated nature’s appearance by becoming part of it. He looked beyond the natural beauty of things and gained a sense of primordial innocence that lead to spiritual fulfillment. That is why the most beautiful poems were often created by those poets who crossed mountains and rivers to seek enlightenment. This may explain why Taoist temples were always built on the peaks of remote mountains.

## **2. Tao Creativity in Chinese Mountain-Water Paintings**

The same aesthetic process of creativity was shared by both Chinese traditional poets and painters. As a matter of fact, as mentioned earlier, many poets were painters as well.

In Chinese painting, influenced by Taoism, an enlightened painter followed Taoism in the same way as a Chinese poet. The painter united himself with nature and experienced interfusion between subjective and objectives during the process of painting. This is the path a painter would choose in order to acquire a “mirror mind.” A mirror mind is a type of spontaneous reflection. “In this spontaneous reflection, one’s potentialities are set free and great creativity is achieved without artificial effort” (Chang 203).

By using the mirror mind, the enlightened painter was able to see through the outer form into the inner state of things. His mind became a mirror and reflected the purity of nature with a minimal subjective distortion. For example, flowers and mountains are what we name these objects. Within a mirror mind, a flower is not a flower and a mountain is not a mountain. All things in the world are the one, the origin. For a better understanding, one might think of the painter’s eye as a microscope. Through the microscope, all one sees are atoms, the origin of materials. Without any subjective judgment, all objects stayed in their original or essential state in painter’s mind. The subject, the painter, thus became purely part of nature. This is what Chinese Taoism philosophy promotes as “combination of man and nature.” This is how a painter could sense and paint the “spiritual rhythm” that vibrates in everything of nature, because the painter himself is vibrating along with nature by being part of nature.

### **3. The Transferable Aesthetics between Poetry and Paintings**

The “inner joy” that Chinese poets experienced in their interfusion with nature is the same as the “spiritual rhythm” that Chinese painters sensed in their process of interfusing with nature.



The “spiritual rhythm,” to some extent, can be visualized as “inner joy” because both aesthetic beauties are the creation produced by following Taoism ontology. Therefore, the two aesthetic beauties become transferable in the essence between poems and paintings.

It is very common in Chinese history, for example, to find many paintings derived from poems and many poems composed based on paintings. The following story may illustrate the “inner joy” and “spiritual rhythm” which can be transferable between poems and paintings.

Yen Chen-ching of the eighth century, famous for his calligraphy, sent five poems of his creation to a friend named Chang Chih-ho, one of the three great Taoist masters of painting, who was generally known by his pen name, Fisherman of Mists and Ripples. The subtle beauty of these poems so moved Chang that he immediately painted the sense described in them. Human figures, fishing boats, mists and ripples, wind and moon, were all imbued with the exquisite subtlety characteristic of the Poems. The transference of an inner experience, which, in this instance, took place between contemporaries.... (Chang 200)

Enlightened poets could compose poems by sensing “spiritual rhythm” in painting, and enlightened painters could paint by grasping the same “inner joy” that is expressed through poems. For instance, Wang Wei was a painter and poet who was influenced by Taoism and Chan. He truly grasped the “inner joy and spiritual rhythms” in both his poetry and paintings. Su Dong Po, one of greatest scholars in the North Song dynasty once said, “When I read the poems of Mo-jie (Wang Wei’ alternate name), I could see the painting within. When I appreciate his painting, I can read his poem out of it.” That is what people called the “spoken poem” (Barnstone, Barnstone and Haixin xvi). The transferability between “inner joy” and “spiritual rhythm” from poetry to paintings indeed exists. It is this transferable quality that lends Chinese Mountain-Water poems and paintings, in particular, the inner beauty that is beyond the limit of the physical world.

## **E. Concrete Poetry**

What is concrete poetry? Perhaps not every one is familiar with this term. Visual poem, sound poem/or material poem? I am afraid there is not a single explanation that could precisely define concrete poetry. But let's take a look at one of definitions in the book Concrete Poetry; a World View by Mary Ellen Solt. Solt states that the term "concrete poetry" has been used following World War II to refer to "a variety of innovations and experiments that are revolutionizing the art of the poem on a global scale and enlarging its possibilities for expression and communication"(Solt 7). After WWII, the experimental poetry movement was very active in Brazil and Europe at about the same time. In 1952, Decio Pignatari, a teacher of industrial design and communication from Brazil, formed a poetry group called the "Noigandres" group. In 1956, after a successful exhibition called "Concrete Art" at the Museum of Modern Art in Sao Paulo, the Noigandres' s work was officially titled 'poesia concreta'- or concrete poetry (Stephen 7).

### **1. Early Visual Poets**

The appearance of "concrete poetry" after WW II doesn't mean that visual poem started only as recently as the middle of the 20th century. In fact, visual poets before WW I had already created rule breaking work. In 1909, Italian Poet Filippo Marinetti (1876-1944 A.D.) established Futurism as "a revolutionary movement for all artists to test their ideas and forms against the new realities of the scientific and industrial society"(Meggs 276). From this beginning, traditional typography became affected since it was challenged by the new typographic revolution of Futurist poets who used extreme freedom in type sets for creating dynamic and poetic visual effects.



## **2. Guillaume Apollinaire**

Apollinaire was born in Rome in 1880. He received his education in Monaco and Nice. (Bernard 13). As a French poet, one of his visual poems, perhaps the most famous and romantic piece, “It Is Raining,” influenced graphic design at a profound level. In this work, he placed type letters such as to imitate raindrops in order to stir up poetic imagination. It Is Raining (Fig 5) is one of the visual poems published in his book entitled *Calligrammes* in which letterforms were placed pictographically. In his poem album, Apollinaire “explored the potential fusion of poetry and painting, and he attempted to introduce the concept of simultaneity to the time and sequence-bound typography of the printed page.” (Meggs 278)

## **3. Concrete Poets After WW II**

After WW II, new materials had most generally been applied to visual poetry. Paper, glass, steels, and many other materials were integrated into visual poems to explore extensions beyond the classic type layout. Since so many untraditional materials began to be used in poetry, the definition of concrete poetry was broadened and diversified.

Scottish poet Ian Hamilton Finlay applied glass to his poem to generate beauty from materials and “constructing a new poem aesthetically” (Solt 44). Associated with an actual functional material, glass, his work goes beyond the normal concept of poem to become a functional object to the environment (Solt 44).

This concrete poem, called “Forsythia,” was composed by Mary Ellen Solt in 1966. It is formed from the letters of the name of the shrub that is blooming. “Forsythia” was



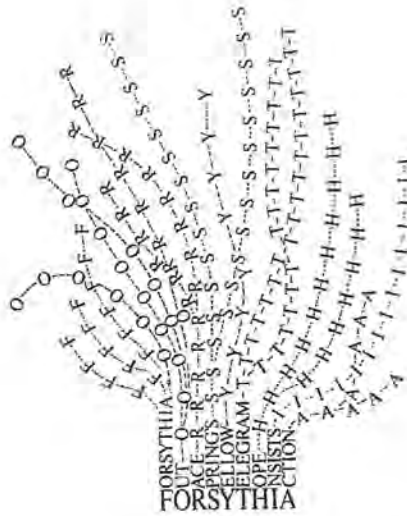


Figure 7, "Forsythia," Marry Ellen Solt, p243, Concrete Poetry: a World View. 1970

typographically concretized by John Dearstyne (Fig 7). He was trying to combine the best of both literate meaning and aesthetics of vision. The yellow background color reflects the natural color of forsythia. Letterforms are placed in a way of representing the actual branches of the plant. A rich poetic sense can thus be activated through an activity of blending indirect reading and direct visuals together.

#### **F. Selected Design Elements and Design Principles**

In ordinary life, people communicate by speaking words. In design, designers use a visual language composed of design elements and design principles. A thorough understanding of design elements and principles is necessary to attain the ability to handle design languages and enhance sensitivity during the design process. This section is a study of design elements and principles that will be applied to topographic posters in this thesis.

## **1. Design Elements**

### **1.1 Dot**

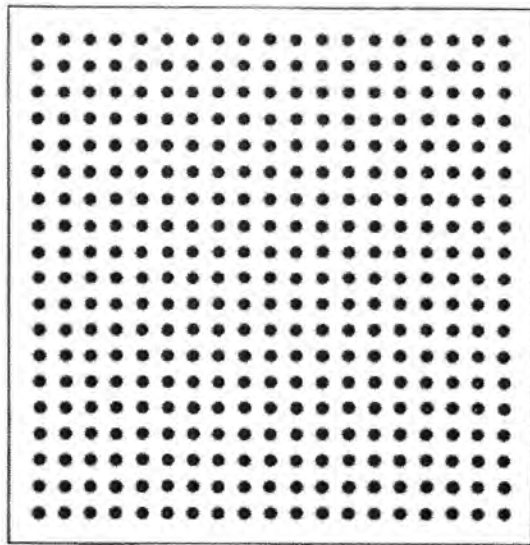
According to Wucius Wong, a dot is a point indicating position. It cannot be measured by length or width. It occupies no space and conceptually is considered as the beginning or the end of a line or the meeting of two lines (42).

Conceptually, a dot is not visible, but once visual attributes such as shape, size, color and texture are modified, a dot may become visible. For example, we can set a dot to a bigger size so it can be seen. When we change the color of the dot, it may become more easily and quickly recognizable.

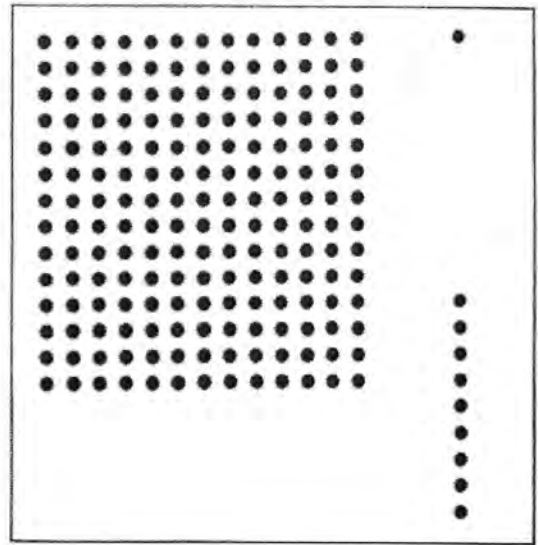
Although a dot is a very basic design element, it can create many different visual effects. Depending on how visual attributes are arranged or changed in a design process, a dot can create both abstract forms and representative forms. For example, Swiss designer Armin Hofmann has used the dot as design element to create a series of visual studies (Fig 8, 9). He created a visual grid using dots and also created symbols and representative images by using dots. The following figures show how dots can be used creatively in graphic design.

### **1.2 Line**

Conceptually, a line can be drawn between any two dots. Wong describe this line as the path that a dot moves (42). In contrast to a conceptual dot, a conceptual line can be measured by length but not width.



6



7

Figure 8, Visual Grids by Using Dots, Armin Hofmann. Graphic Design Manual, p. 24, 1965



Figure 9, Abstract Form and Representative Form by Using Dots, Armin Hofmann, Graphic Design Manual, p. 34, 1965

Visually, a line has attributes such as shape, size (length/width), color, and texture. By changing visual attributes, a visual line can become curved or straight, thick or thin, bold or fine, smooth or tough. A designer can change these attributes to modify the visual qualities of lines to meet his or her design needs.

In the graphic design area, lines can be basically categorized as straight lines and curved lines. In terms of direction, lines can be vertical, horizontal, or diagonal. In graphic design, lines can “show direction, lead eyes, outlining objects, divide space and communicate feeling or emotion”(Stout, <http>). The next image is a design in which lines have been used to convey a feeling of speed (Fig10).

Lines visually evoke richer emotions than dots. Horizontal orientation suggests calmness, stability and tranquility. Vertical orientation gives a feeling of balance, formality and alertness. Diagonal orientation suggests movement and action (Lei 16). These emotional qualities of lines, if well applied, can enhance message communication.

### **1.3 Plane / Form /Shape**

According to Wong, a conceptual plane is “the path of a line in motion (in a direction other than its own intrinsic direction) A plane has length and breadth, but no thickness.”(42) visually, a plane is a two dimensional surface.

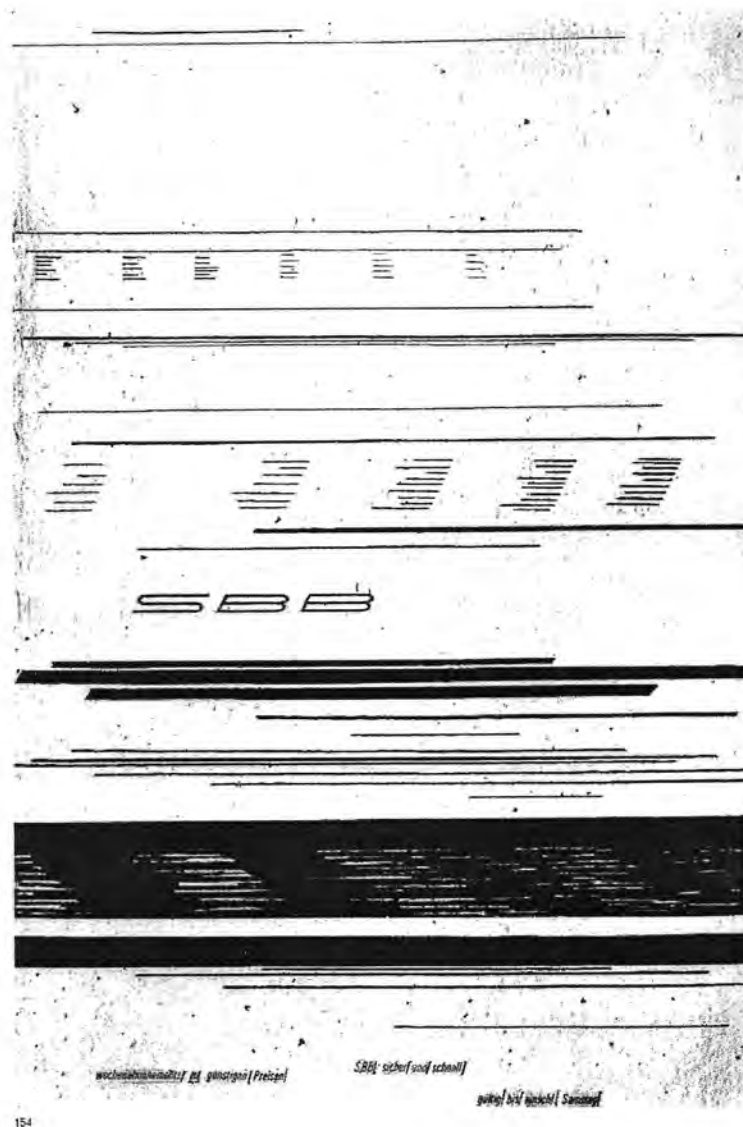


Figure 10, Railway Poster, p. 94, Graphic Design Manual, Armin Hofmann, 1965

In graphic design, form or shape is a more common term in graphic design than plane. Basically, there are two types of forms, geometrical and organic. A geometrical form is visually simple, stable, sharp, and masculine. An organic form in contrast conveys senses of elegance, softness, expression, and femininity (Lei 19).



## 1.4 Texture

Texture allows humans to recognize the quality of an object. Through differences in texture, people can identify different materials.

Basically, there are three kinds of visual textures. According to Wong, they are decorative texture, spontaneous texture and mechanical texture (Fig 11). Decorative texture does not have much effect on shapes and their interrelationships, so it is subordinate to shape.

Spontaneous texture “does not decorate the surface but is a part of the process of visual creation.” (Wong 119) In this case, shape and texture cannot be separated from one other; otherwise both lose points of attachment and become nothing or empty. Mechanical texture refers to texture that is obtained by special mechanical means. It can be created by massive mechanical arrangement of design elements such as dots, lines, and shapes. Massive typographic placement is considered as a type of mechanical texture.

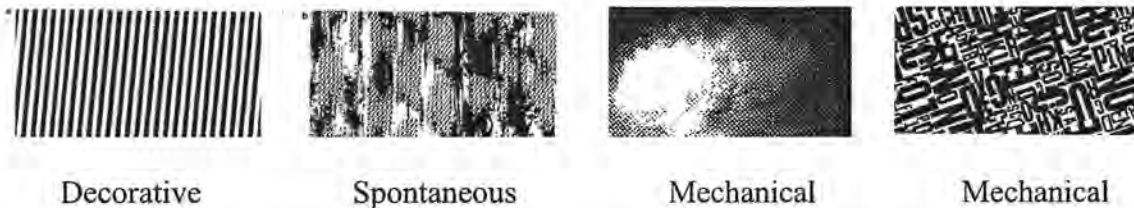


Figure 11, Three Types of Texture, p. 118, Principles of Form and Design, Wucius Wong, 1993

## 2. Selected Design Principles

### 2.1 Repetition:

In our daily life, a great deal of visual repetition can be found in a wide variety of structures such as brick buildings, stairs, keyboards, and supermarket goods. Repetition is perhaps one

of the most useful design principles. According to Wong, if the same design element is used more than once, it is called repetition (51) (Fig 12).



Figure 12, Examples of Design Principle: Repetition, p. 57, Principles of Form and Design, Wucius Wong, 1993

In graphic design, repetitive design elements can create a strong visual power while retaining a sense of harmony. Next design provides a good visual explanation (Fig 13). The massive repetition of lines and dots overwhelmingly impact the viewer's eyes.

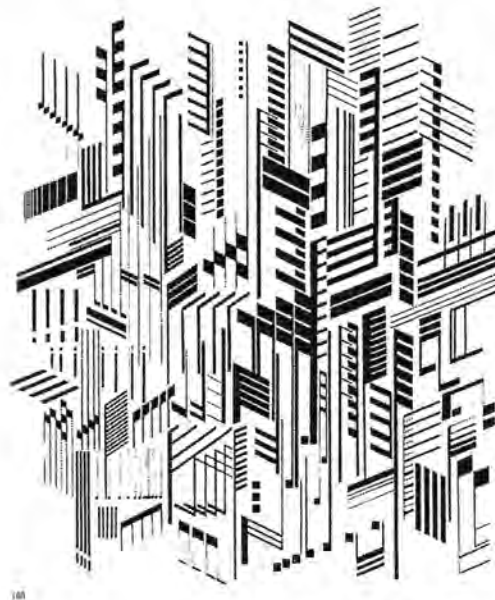


Figure 13, Draft for a Music Poster, p. 94, Graphic Design Manual, Armin Hofmann, 1965

## 2.2 Contrast

In our daily life, visual contrast happens frequently (Wong 105). Any two different design elements existing together can constitute contrast. The difference between two design elements could be shape, color, size, direction, position, and texture etc. The next image (Figure 14) shows all different contrasts such as shape, size, color (black/white), texture, direction, position, space and gravity (Wong 105, 107).

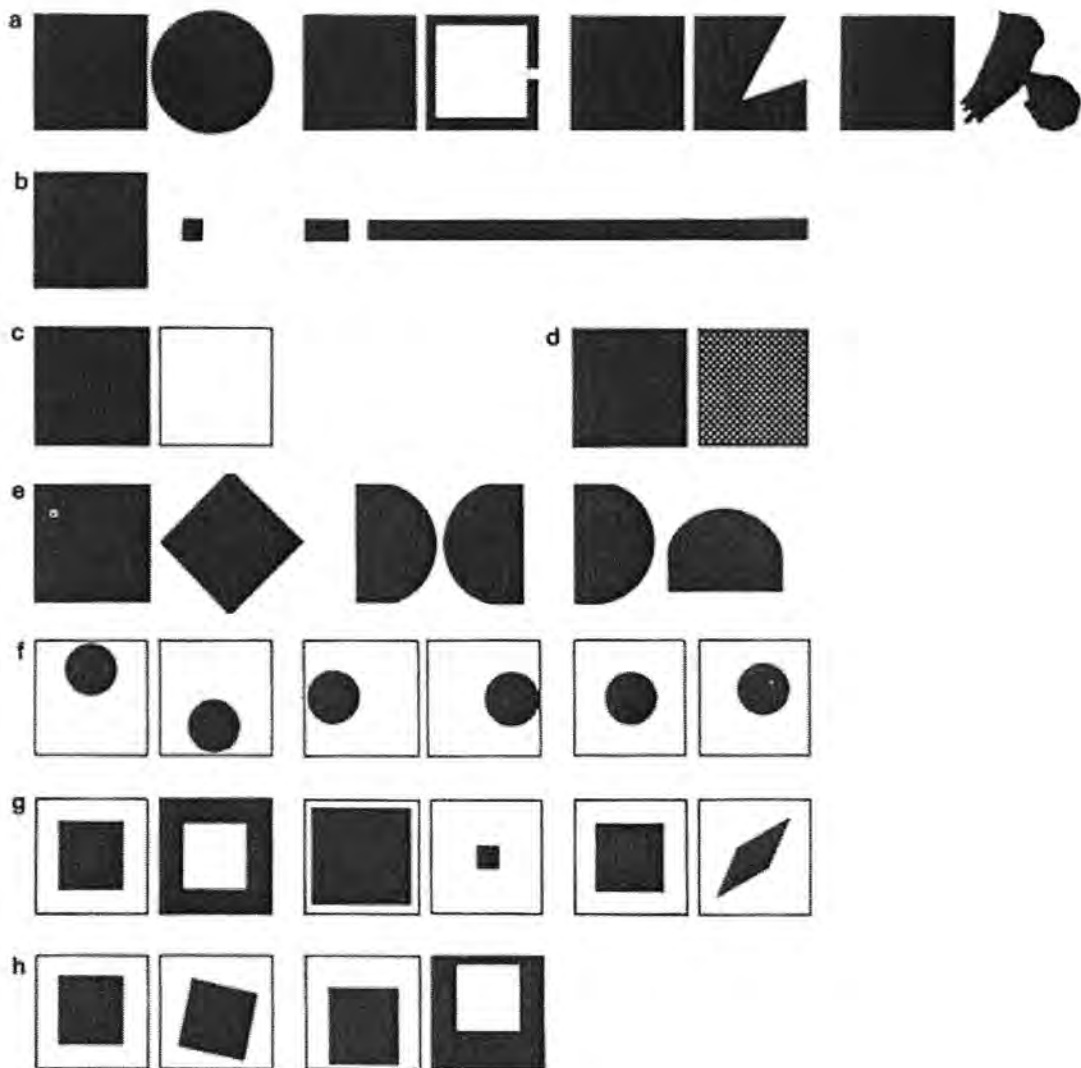


Figure 14, Assorted Visual Contrasts, p. 107, Principles of Form and Design, Wucius Wong, 1993

In graphic design, contrast as a design principle is frequently applied. It has been proven “extremely fruitful because, as the basis of more complicated compositional studies, it already affords new insights for decisive importance.”(Hofmann 17) Contrast can draw visual attention, add visual variety, and stir up dynamic effects. The next image shows a basic application of contrast used in graphic design in which dot and line and various objects are juxtaposed in contrast (Hofmann 138) (Fig 15).



Figure 15, Confrontation Study, p. 138, Graphic Design Manual, Armin Hofmann, 1965

### 2.3 Space

There are many ways to define space. Wong classified space into positive/negative space and illusory space. (127) “Positive space is the space surrounding negative space and negative space is the space surrounding positive space”(127). Normally, we call black or dark space positive and white or bright space negative, but as a matter of fact, it is difficult to define

them this way since cases may vary. When one space surrounds another smaller space, we may see the bigger space as negative space. As another example, when dark space is dominating and surrounding white space, we may see it as a negative space (Fig16). If, on the other hand, white space is dominating and surrounding dark space, we may see the white space as negative space (Fig 17). It seems that negative space is always associated

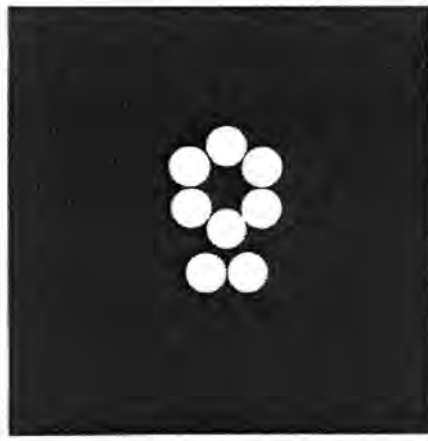


Figure 16, Negative Positive 1, p. 56, Principles of Form and Design, Wucius Wong, 1993

with being a background and, therefore, surrounding space is more commonly seen as negative space and surrounded space is normally considered as positive space.

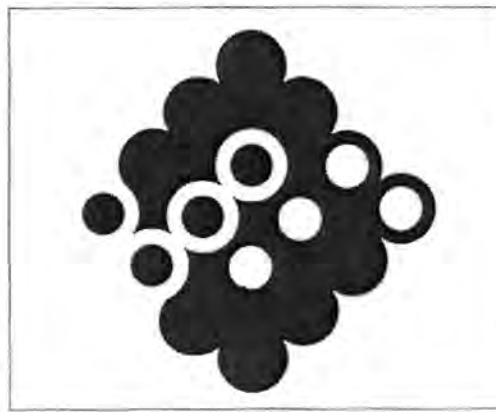


Figure 17, Negative Positive 2, p. 65, Principles of Form and Design, Wucius Wong, 1993

Graphically, negative and positive space is expressive. It is an effective design principle with which to activate visual pleasure by providing visual contrast and harmony. The interflow between positive space and negative space can trigger an exiting visual phenomenon with which to grab a viewer's attention.

Illusionary space, according to Wong, can be created by design elements overlapping, changing size, color, texture, view, curving or bending, and by the addition of shadow (129). It seems illusionary space is often a study about visual perspective. Depending on how overlapping, size, color and others are manipulated, a corresponding visual illusion space can be created. The next picture shows some examples of illusionary space (Fig 18).



Figure 18, Illusory Space

For overlap, three identical black dots are stacked, automatically creating an illusionary space between them. From size difference, we can, based on our life experience, tell that a small dot is further away than the bigger dot. In terms of color difference, because a black dot creates a stronger contrast with a white background than a lighter-colored dot, it visually appears closer than the light dot even though both of them are the same size.

### CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

The methods in this study will involve a linear analyzing process as follows:

1. Selecting a Mountain-Water poem.
2. Selecting a Mountain-Water painting.
3. Analyzing the relationship between the poem and the painting.
4. Developing reductive forms based on the selected painting using various graphic elements and design principles.
5. Selecting a typeface and explaining its relationship to the selected poem and painting.
6. Experimental typographic placement of the poem text based on the grid systems.
7. Final adjustments and completed work.

#### **A. Selecting a Mountain-Water Poem**

The selected poem is Mt. ZhongNan, composed by poet Wang Wei during the T'ang dynasty. Ms. Pauline Yu translated this poem in her publication, The Poetry of WANG WEI. (Yu 170) in which some background information about this poem also is provided.

Mountain ZhongNan is located 12 miles away from Chang An County at Xi An City in China, which was the former capital city of T'ang dynasty. The mountain is rich in woods, creeks, and beautiful hills, and spans more than 80 miles across ShaanXi province from east to west. According to Ms. Pauline Yu, the ZhongNan is also called Mountain Taiyi to



indicate its grand height. Here is the English translation of Mountain ZhongNan taken from Pauline Yu's book.

### Mountain ZhongNan

Taiyi nears the celestial capital;

Continuous mountains arrive at the edge of the sea.

White clouds, as I turn and gaze, merge.

Azure mists, as I enter and look, disappear.

The whole expanse shifts at the central peak.

Shadow and light differ in every valley.

Wishing to seek lodging among men,

I cross the water to ask an old woodsman.

(Note: Taiyi is another name of Mountain ZhongNan)

(Yu 170)

Reading the poem creates an imaginary vision of a magnificent mountain surrounded by clouds. The first verse describes a distant view of the whole mountain. Taiyi is used here as a metaphor to describe the height of the mountain as a "celestial capital." The second phrase presents a closer view of the mountain. White clouds float and heavy mists wreath around so that nothing can be seen. The major middle peak of the mountain divides the whole mountain into two parts. Shadow and light are ever changing in each valley. In the last verse, the poet shifted the focus from the mountain landscape to himself asking a woodman for lodging, leaving a beautiful picture for readers.

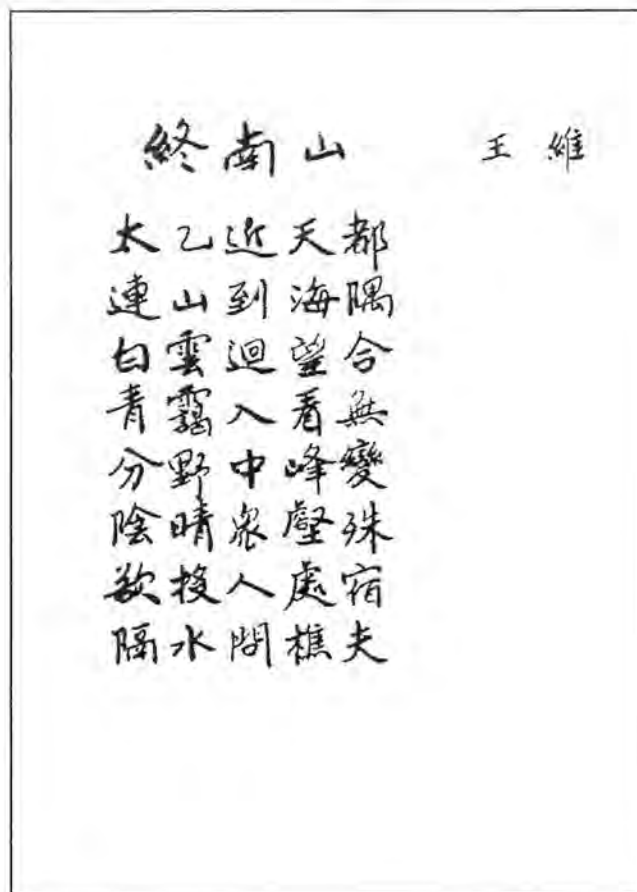


Figure 19, Poem Calligraphy, p. 247, *Chinese Poetry*, Yip, 1976

MOUNT CHUNG-NAN					Wang Wei (701-761)
1. T'ai	i	near	sky	capital	
(i.e., Chungnan)				(i.e., imperial capital)	
2. link	mountain/s	connect	sea	edge	
3. white	cloud/s	turn-to-look-back		close	
4. green	mist/s	enter	see	none	
5. divide	wilds; land	middle	peak	change	
6. shade	shine	all	valley/s	different	
7. want	to-stay-over	man/s	residence	sleep	
8. across	stream; water	ask	woodcutter	—	

1. Chungnan ranges near the imperial capital.
2. Mountain upon mountain to sea's brim.
3. White clouds—looking back—close up.
4. Green mists—entering—nothing.
5. Terrestrial divisions change at the middle peak.
6. Shade and light differ with every valley.
7. To stay over in some stranger's house—
8. Across the water, ask a woodcutter.

Figure 20, Poem Word by Word Translation, p. 248. *Chinese poetry*, Yip, 1976

## B. Selecting The Mountain Water Painting

The painting I chose is one of the masterpieces, titled “Early Spring.” It was painted by Guo Xi during the North Song dynasty (960-1126 A.D.). Guo Xi was “taken as a court painter during the reign of Emperor Shen-zong (1068-1085 A.D.) and received unusual favor from the Emperor for his revolutionary new methods.” (Miyagawa 177) Guo Xi was not only a brilliant palace painter, but also a talented art critic. By developing a new painting theory “Ling Quan Gao Zhi” (林泉高致), Guo Xi raised Chinese landscape painting to a new and brilliant height in Chinese painting history. Through a quote from CHINESE PAINTING, primarily edited by Torao Miyagawa, we may recognize the great art achievement of Guo Xi during the North Song dynasty.

The arrival of late-Northern Song court painter Guo Xi brought a breath of fresh air to the painting world. First taken on as a court painter by merit of his high standing in the Li Cheng School, Guo was commissioned by the emperor Shen-zong in his eagerness to see stylistic innovations to personally execute murals throughout the palace. Guo was not merely a painter after the Li manner; laboring to consolidate all painting styles since the mid-Tang. He wrote the compendium Ling Quan Gao Zhi (林泉高致). More concrete expression was given to this breadth of knowledge in his masterpiece “Early Spring.” A virtual encyclopedia of pictorial styles, this one picture feature a juxtaposition of the “three distances” (sanyuan)-“high distance,” “deep distance” (shenyuan), and “level distance”- and even including qi and the “three-division method” for good measure. Guo’s most astounding achievement was that he formulated this ideal synthesis of realism and rationalism, and at the same time incorporating the lyricism requisite for literati tastes. “Early Spring” stands out as a monument of Chinese painting, a culmination of all landscape paint trends since the mid-Tang. (123)

Guo Xi’s profound knowledge and painting skills made him one of the most outstanding painters during the North Song dynasty. The painting “Early Spring” is considered to be one of his most representative paintings. It is not an ordinary landscape painting but rather an idealized artificial landscape work. The mountain landscape in the painting may not be found

in real life, because it is a landscape that was “designed” by the painter to reach a formalistically perfect composition rather than just a single copy of an actual mountain scene. The mountain landscape was generated through the artist’s heart, rather than only by his eyes. This particular creative method is the way that how a Chinese painter reflect nature in a subjective manner. It is a communication between spirit and nature through the idealized landscape. The painting process, therefore, becomes a vehicle for the painter seeking a harmony or an ideal relation between himself and nature. George Rowley has described how this particular painting is idealized:

By sheer multiplicity of parts, piling mountain upon mountain, the painters created an overwhelming sense of the majesty and vastness of nature. By moving focus, from part to part, by avoiding compositional axes, and by opening up the views at the sides according to the advice of Kuo His, the designs suggested a sequential experience in time and a movement beyond the limits of the painting into the boundless infinity of the universe. (6)

The figure on next page shows the artificial mountain, an ideal landscape painting (Fig 21).

### **C. The Relationship between the Selected Poem and Painting.**

Wang Wei’s poem “Mt. ZhongNan” and Guo Xi’s painting “Early Spring” were not chosen randomly in this study, but rather were based on strong connections with respect to philosophy, art creativity, and historical relations. Of special importance was the art creativity guided by Chinese traditional philosophy-Taoism, since it influenced the poem and painting at a very fundamental level. The Analysis in the next section will describe the connections between the selected poem and painting.

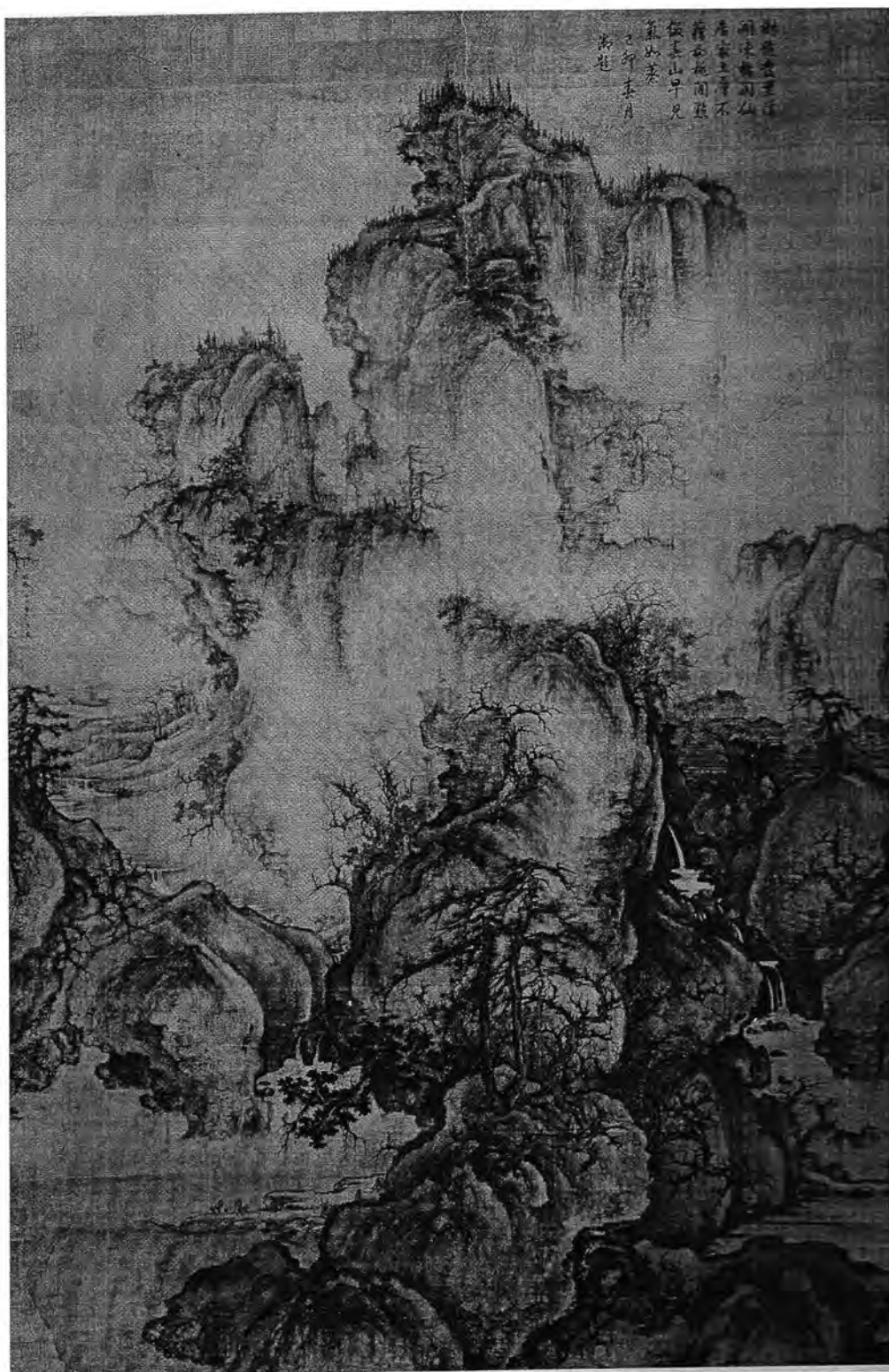


Figure 21, “Early Spring”, by Guo Xi, North Song dynasty, 158.3 x 108.1 cm, National Palace Museum, Taipei.

First, both the poem and painting are influenced by Chinese traditional philosophy –Taoism at a fundamental level. Wang Wei, as previously explained, is a poet deeply influenced by Taoism, and many of his poems reflect Tao concepts. The poem Mt. ZhongNan is also one of these Tao poems. In the poem Mt. ZhongNan, some verses imply obvious Taoism concepts. For example, Taiyi as a term, according to Pauline Yu, (170) refers to the Mountain ZhongNan. But Taiyi, as a typical Tao term, originally appears in Taoism and means the height of the sky.

Second, Tao concepts such as “Nothingness” or “Emptiness” (空) are also embedded in the poem. From the analysis conducted by Yu, we may see how the “Emptiness” subtly influences this poem at a deeper level.

...And as he proceeds forward, the azure mists which he had once perhaps perceived as a distinct entity have suddenly, now that he has penetrated them, disappeared or become “ nothing”(wu/无). In both directions his view is blocked, by an enclosing barrier of clouds behind undefined “nothingness” ahead; the neo-Taoist implications of wu, of course, also suggest that the true basis of reality is something that cannot “looked” at. (156)

From above quotation, we can see the play of Taoism. While in the selected painting, Early Spring, we see the same play.

For Chinese mountain-water painting, “Nothingness” or “Emptiness” had been given much emphasis as a fundamental principle. Without “Emptiness”, the painting loses its unseen spirit. The painted area and unpainted area (emptiness) need to be interactive in order to achieve Ch’i (air or breath). In the painting, “Chinese painter begins with the pictorial reality of shih, then suggests through hsü (emptiness), the reality of the spirit beyond form, with a



flow and effortlessness which results in the indescribable unity of hun.” (Rowley 77)

According to Rowley, in the Chinese painting, “Emptiness” is the unseen, which is beyond form (solid mountain). Solidness is the visible, and relied on form. The “state of flow and relativity between the seen and the unseen” reflects the operation of the Tao. (77)

“Ch’i” is another Tao principle. As already explained in “How Chinese Painting Integrated Tao Principles,” Ch’i (air) is the result from the play of Yin (emptiness) and Yang (solidness). A play of Yin and Yang in a balanced and harmony state will create Ch’i or energy. In a typical Tao symbol, Yin and Yang will form between them an “S” shape in order to reach an idealized balance as shown in the illustration.



Figure 22, Symbol of Yin and Yang.

Through interactive play between Yin and Ying on the “S” pattern, energy is generated. It is not difficult to understand this point because it has been tested that the “S” shape visually contains more energy and dynamics. For example, the Swiss designer Hofmann once



provided a visual example to explain this dynamic shape. (Fig 23) He used the term “dynamic action” in the next graphic images without mentioning the “S” shape, but the example he provided is indeed a clear reversed “S” shape layout. (104)

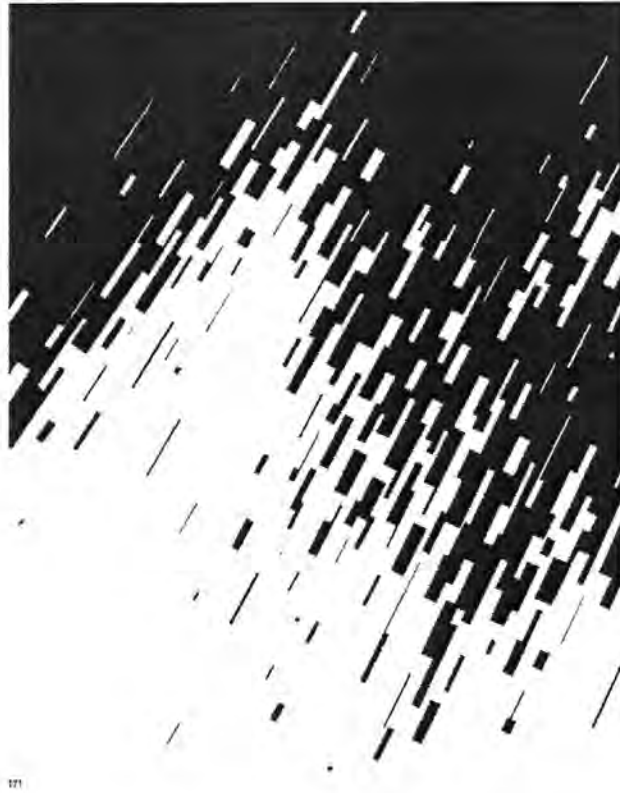


Figure 23, Intensification of the Dynamic Action, p. 104, Graphic Design Manual, Armin Hofmann, 1965

In the masterpiece painting “Early Spring”, we can easily recognize the composition of the painting feathering a strong visual clue of “S” shape (Fig 23). It is the particular way the artist applied to create “Ch’i ” to create a living quality to the painting. Torao Miyagawa also mentioned the “Ch’i ” quality existing in the painting-“Early Spring.” He described the Early Spring as follows

“...even includes **qi** (Ch’i) and the “Three division method” for good measure” (123).

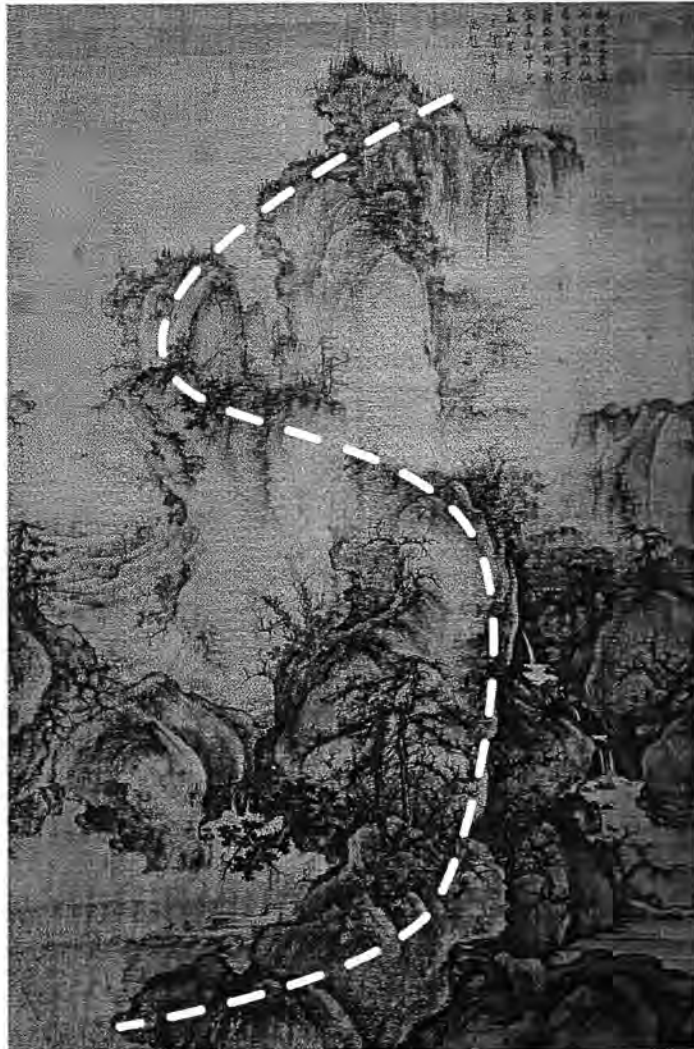


Figure 24, “S” Shape Composition Trend in the Painting “Early Spring”

Second, the poem and the painting share the same subject matter - nature. Seeking a harmonious relationship between man and nature was an everlasting pursuit for Chinese poets and painters. “Going back to nature” can be frequently found in both Chinese painting and poetry. As Rowley describes:

The sentimentalizing of bucolic life never found favor in China because it signified condescension on the part of the man who played at “going back to nature.” There was nothing faked about the Chinese painter’s rusticity; often he led the equivalent of

a peasant life and always he desired the simplicity of direct physical contact with nature just as he sought intellectual knowledge of natural principles, that was why the Chinese poet could truly say, "Mountain and I never grow tired of one another." (22)

The tight bond between man and nature affects poems and painting at such a fundamental level that many ancient Chinese scholars were naturally not only poets but also painters.

Wang Wei is a typical example in the T'ang dynasty. This may explain why many Chinese mountain water paintings have a poem written on them. The painter, also a scholar, nearly always leaves a large empty space on his painting on which to place his poem.

#### **D. Development of Reductive Forms (underlying structure) Based on the Selected Painting**

The original painting contains many details that become distracting when the painting is applied as an underlying structure. After these details are deleted, the major compositional trend or the layout of the mountain-water painting will become revealed and easier to recognize. This compositional layout will be further simplified with design elements such as dot, lines, space in design principles such as direction, repetition, contrast and texture etc., to create useful reductive forms as a guide for future poem text placements.

Adobe Photoshop is a good tool with which to start this process. I first scanned the painting into Adobe Photoshop. I then used Photoshop's adjustment tools to modify image contrast in order to lighten some unnecessary details. The fig 25 shows the painting before and after the scanning process.

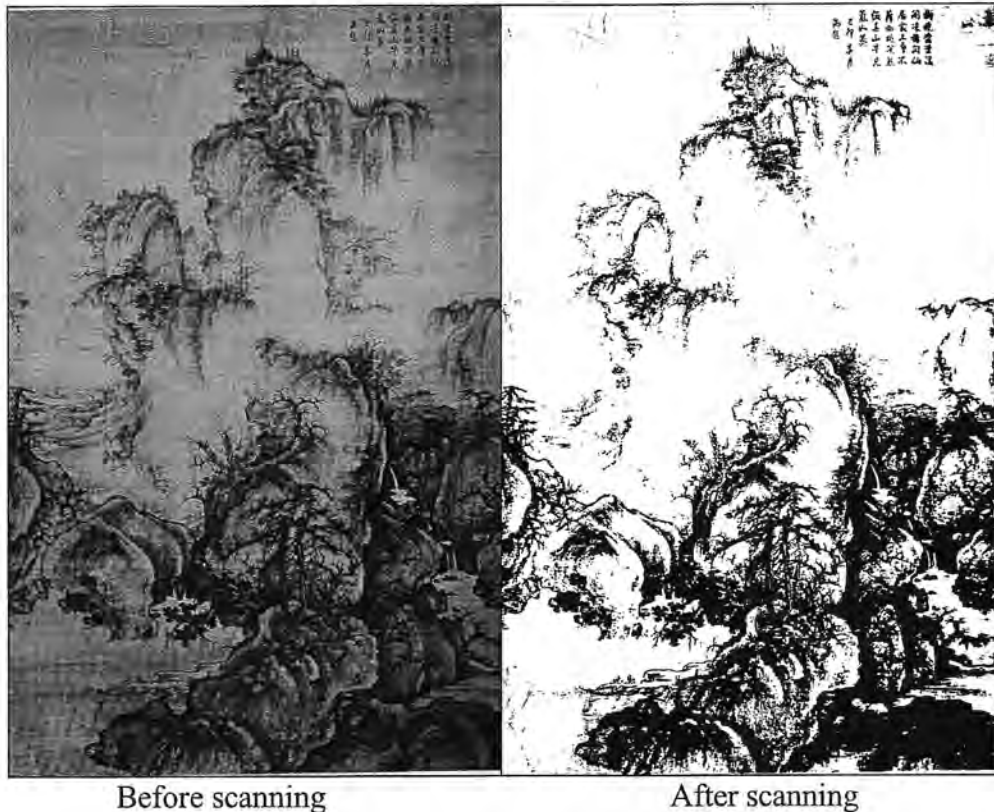


Figure 25, The Painting Difference Before Scanning and After Scanning.

Once the painting details such as small branches, shrubs, mountain texture, tones etc, have been deleted as shown in figure 25, the next step is to continue simplifying the scanned painting using design elements and principles. Figure 26 shows initial experimental sketches of simplifying the painting into a reductive form.

### E. Typeface Selection

Since the purpose of font selection is to reflect the historical value and visual quality of Chinese mountain water painting, both the historical information and visual effects of the selected typeface become important. There are many modern typefaces with elaborate appearances in the type specimens; some have strong visual texture while others may convey

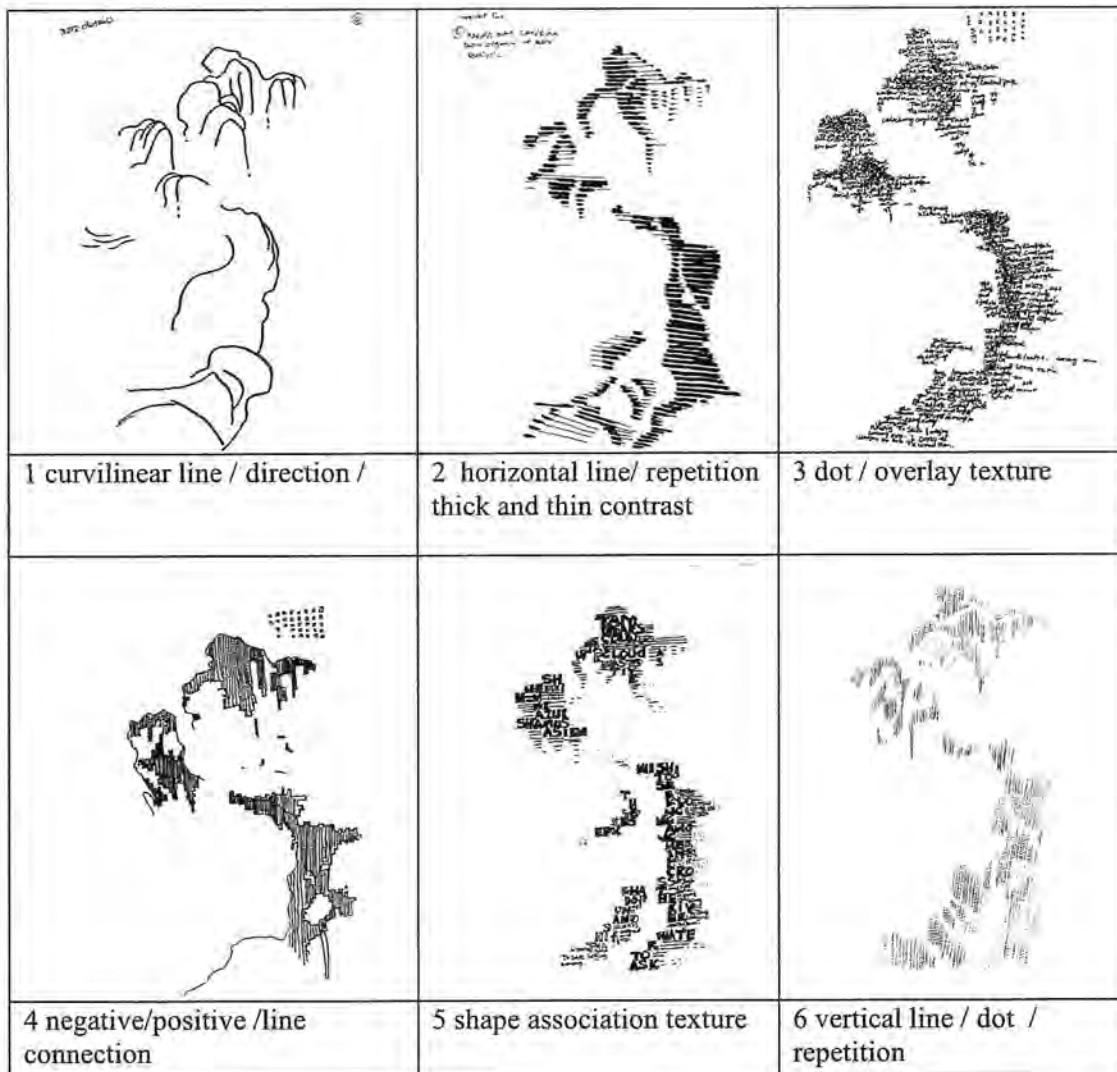


Figure 26, The Initial Sketches of Developing Reductive Forms.

deeper social and historical elements. However, in this study, applying such elaborate typeface seemed likely to distract the core of the study. Therefore, the Claude Garamond typeface is selected for this design study because the Garamond is one of the representative serif fonts in Old Style, originally produced by Garamond at about 1455A.D. Its appearance is warm and friendly and maintains a Renaissance delicacy. Since China T'ang poetry has been described as a Chinese Renaissance, a Renaissance era typeface like Garamond conveys

the aura of convention. Another reason it was selected is because it is one of the most comfortable typeface to read.

An alternate typeface is Helvetica, belonging to the sans serif classification of typeface. It was developed in 1957, by Max Miedinger and Edouard Hoffman (33). There are two reasons this typeface was selected. One is that Helvetica has a large x-height, and all strokes are optically equal in weight, with which the type naturally forms a visual unity and harmony (Fig 27). Another reason I selected Helvetica is that most of strokes of the Helvetica have strong horizontal or vertical direction, even including the end of each stroke, lower or upper case. Helvetica is a very square looking. It makes possible to match and combine letter forms together with the design principle of shape association. Particularly in the project study using the texture, when massive letters are juxtaposed to create a visual texture, this typeface will be very useful to meet the requirement.

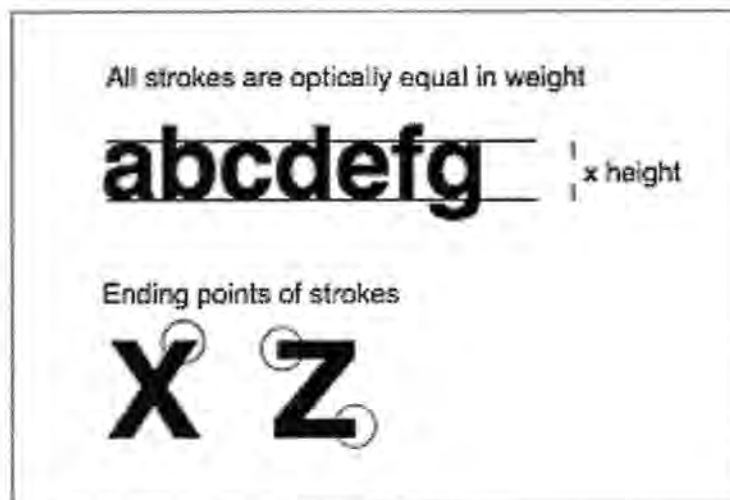


Figure 27, Helvetica Typeface



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **PROJECT STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to explore design possibilities through which Chinese mountain-water poetry will be visually transformed into a Western typographic design in poster format and to experiment with design principles to integrate selected mountain-water poem and painting together to visually reveal the Tao beauty embedded in both poem and painting. The study also presents a discussion of how spiritual beauty can be shared between Chinese mountain-water poetry and painting in the context of the Taoism.

Through this experimental study, design elements such as dot, line and plane as well as design principles such as direction, repetition and space will be carefully experimented with to create different reductive forms based on the selected painting. After the reductive forms are developed, the text translated from the selected poem, will be placed on the reductive forms, which work as underlying structures, to create typographic posters.

#### **A. Study One: Direction**

The first reductive form is developed based on the design principle of direction. When transparent paper is placed over the painting, one can see compositional structural lines along the mountain image through the paper. These structural lines contain a strong sense of direction as indicated by the first sketch in the figure 28. These lines can form clear guidelines for the placement of the poem's text and also imply a reading hierarchy because of the strong sense of direction they display. Figure 28 shows each critical step of developing the final reductive form using principle of direction.






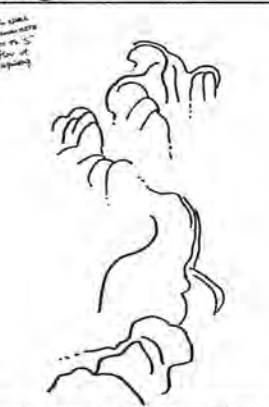

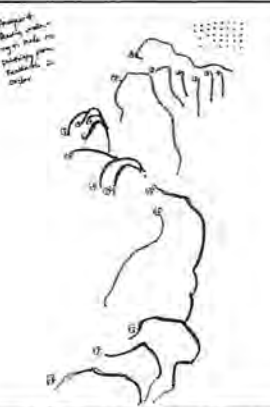



		
<p>1 initial structural line based on the mountain in the painting.</p>	<p>2 adding more details.</p>	<p>3 more linear structure following the "S" shape.</p>
		
<p>4 more emphasis on the "S" shape flow.</p>	<p>4 adding thin/thick contrasting to bring in spatial elements.</p>	<p>5 explore and analyze a line structural order/hierarchy, which will affect reading hierarchy.</p>
		
<p>6 thicken lines to emphasize the "S" shape layout.</p>	<p>7 smoothing lines out to bring in the principle of rhythm.</p>	<p>8 the final reductive form.</p>

Figure 28, Each Critical Step on Developing the Reductive Form in the Design Principle of Direction

Once the final reductive form has been precisely produced, it shows a clear graphic layout that contains hierarchical direction without losing the visual quality of representing a mountain.

Following common human ergonomic reading habits, a visual starting point from the top of the reductive form will naturally lead a viewer to the bottom through connections between line and line, both physically and optically. The reductive form still maintains a proper structure of the mountain from the painting as a compositional tendency of “S” shape becomes clearly observable after the final reductive form has been produced. The next step is to place the poem text over to the reductive form to create a “text landscape”. First, the reductive form is naturally divided into four components according to the painting layout. On each component, poem text will be assigned accordingly (Fig 29).

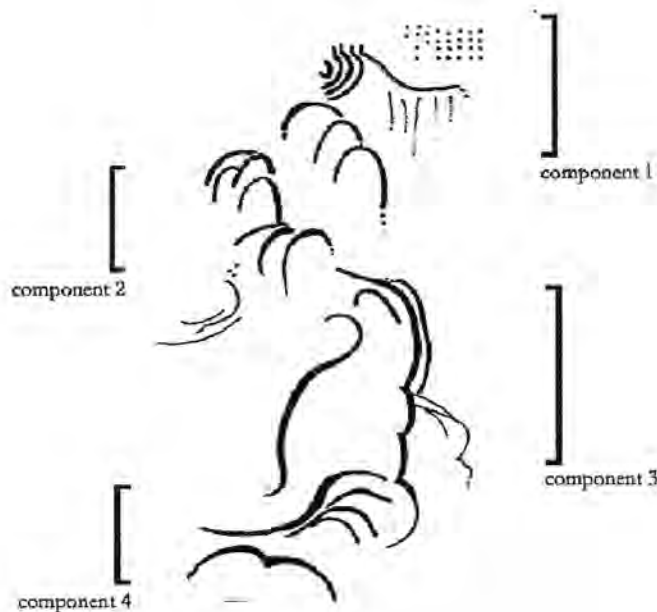


Figure 29, The Reductive Form for Direction

Figure 30 shows the initial placement of text on component one and two. In this step, a small type size is used to reinforce visual space even though the reductive form itself already contains an optical space through the relationship between lines. However, the space between letters remains variable in order to create visual rhythm.

The figure 31 shows the results of the experiment of using a larger type size to make component three optically stand out. Tracking is carefully adjusted to avoid letter overlap for better readability. On component three, the ultimate purpose of type adjustment is to create a smoother visual connection between components two and four, and to help reinforce visual closeness, which is one of three perspective methods used in the painting (Miyagawa 123).

Figure 32 shows a continuous placement of text type on component four. In this step, the basic text layout is finally established based on the reductive form underneath. Type design attributes such as type size, weight, kerning, and tracking, have been initially manipulated to create visual pleasure and similarity to the mountain in the painting.

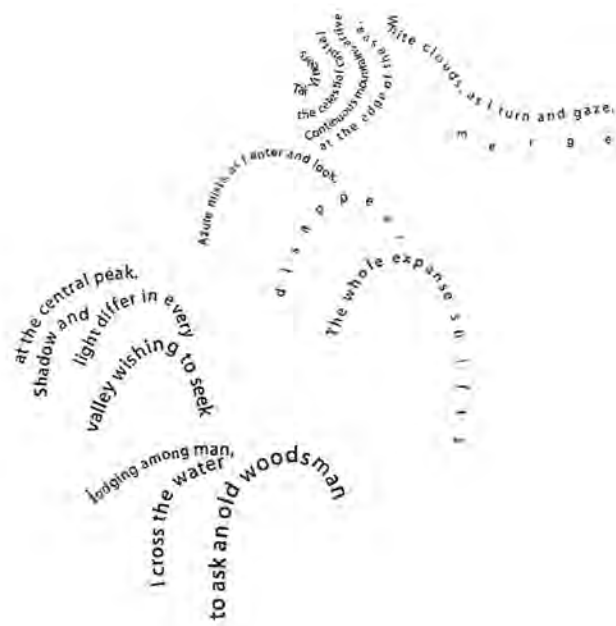


Figure 30, The Initial Text Placement on Component One.

at the central peak.  
 Shadow and light differ in every  
 valley wishing to seek  
 lodging among man,  
 I cross the water  
 to ask an old woodsman  
 at the edge of the sea  
 Taiyi nears the celestial, Continuous mountains arrive  
 The whole expanse of  
 d i s a p p e a r s  
 Azure mist as I enter and look  
 the celestial  
 Continuous mountains arrive  
 at the edge of  
 white clouds, as I turn and gaze,  
 m e r g e

Figure 31, The Initial Text Placement on Component Two and Part of Three.

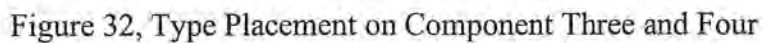
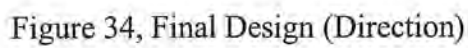


Figure 32, Type Placement on Component Three and Four



Figure 33, The Result of Further Adjustments in Type Size, Text Grouping, Rhythm, and Visual Balance.





Loosman

## B. Study Two: Repetition of Horizontal Lines

The second project is developed based on the design principle of repetition with horizontal lines, since horizontal lines convey a visual quality of “perpetuity, peace, silence, and stability.” (Lei 16) All these visual qualities perfectly meet the painting’s artistic conception as influenced by Taoism. When the poem’s text is placed in accordance with horizontal lines, the same visual qualities carried by these lines will be naturally transferred to the poem text.







		
1 using curve lines to find the tendency of mountain structure.	2 adding horizontal lines in repetition.	3 integrating rhythm into the reductive form.
		
4 integrating vertical line into part of the reductive form to reveal mountain structures.	5 continuing to adjust the length of horizontal lines.	6 the final reductive form.

Figure 35, Refining Process for the Reductive Form with Horizontal Lines Repetition.

On the painting, curvilinear line segments are marked first to identify the painting’s structural tendency. Then horizontal lines are left aligned to the curvilinear line segments and used to

fill the shadow area on the painting, as shown on figure 35. After filling all necessary shadow areas with horizontal lines, the detour line segments as guide lines can be deleted and leave only the horizontal lines as the final reductive form, to guide placement of the poem's text. Figure 35 presents a sequential series of sketches representing the process of developing the reductive form with horizontal lines.

After a series of exploration and adjustments, a final reductive form is developed. It shows a visual harmony between horizontal lines and the structure of mountain, because horizontal lines in repetition dominate the form. These horizontal lines are not placed randomly but follow the mountain's structures. As a result, the repetitive horizontal lines not only unify the reductive form and create negative / shadow space based on the structures of mountain, but also create visual texture by repeating horizontal lines.

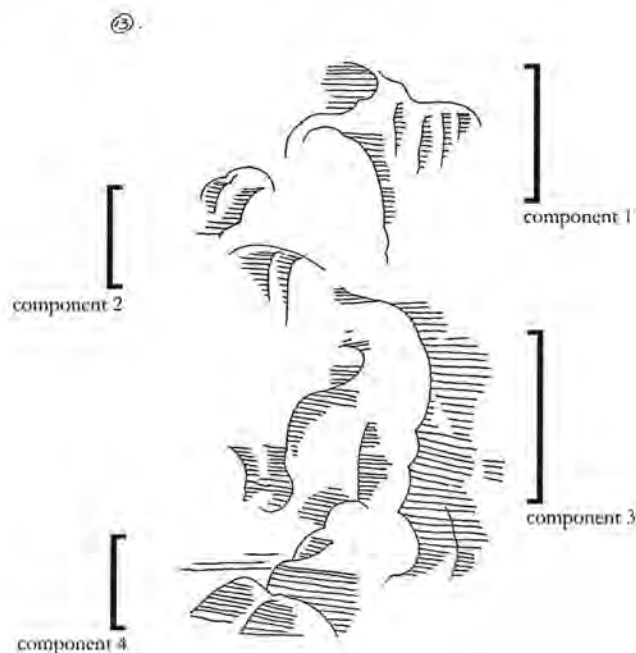


Figure 36, Final Reductive Form for Horizontal Lines

Visually, the reductive form is divided into four components as shown in the right side of the figure 36. Following the form, type size is assigned strictly to 8 points because a smaller type size can create an illusory distance. Tracking is adjusted to allow loosen the spacing between type letters for the same purpose of creating a visual distance, while still maintaining a visual connection and unity. A small size type and larger tracking in this case will produce the visual depth as shown in figure 37. At this stage, quietness or tranquility can already be sensed. Sequentially, on component two, 10 point type size is assigned, which is a little bigger than 8 point, for the purpose of visually pulling closer. Following the guide by the reductive form underneath, type placed on the component two is adjusted slightly to create an optical connection between component one and component three.

Figure 38 shows a continued text placement on component three. 14 point type pulls component three as a mountain block visually closer to the viewer. However, type size varieties seem not enough. A contrast between tight and tracking is adjusted accordingly to create more visual rhythm in order to pull the component three closer to the viewer.

Component four on the reductive form functions as an ending section. Type size stays at 14 points to maintain visual unity with component three, but the type is placed loosely or perhaps and somewhat scattered to draw less visual attention. However, an optical connection is still maintained in order to organically unify the four components.

Taiyi hears the  
 celestial capital;  
 Continuous mountain  
 arrive at the edge of the sea,  
 While clouds, as I turn  
 and gaze,  
 m e r g e  
 Azure  
 mist,  
 as  
 enter and  
 look  
 the whole  
 expanse  
 shifts  
 at the  
 central  
 peak.  
 Shadow  
 and  
 light  
 differ  
 in  
 every  
 valley  
 disappear  
 Wishing  
 to seek  
 lodging among  
 men  
 I cross the water  
 to ask an old  
 woods man  
 Taiyi hears the celestial capital  
 Continuous  
 mountains  
 arrive  
 at  
 the  
 edge  
 of  
 the  
 sea  
 White clouds  
 as I turn and gaze,  
 m e r g e  
 Azure mists,  
 as I enter and look  
 d i s a p p e a r  
 The whole expanse  
 s h i f t s  
 at the central peak  
 Shadow and light  
 d i f f e r  
 in every valley  
 Wishing  
 to s e e k  
 lodging among men  
 I cross the water  
 to ask an old  
 w o o d s m a n

Figure 37, Initial Type Placement on Component One, Two, and Three.

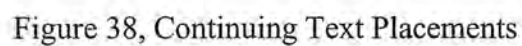




Figure 39, Continuing Type Placement on Component Four.





### **C. Study Three: Repetition of Vertical Lines**

Like horizontal lines, vertical lines also have their own visual qualities that evoke emotions. They can deliver a sense of “solemnity and loneliness.” (Lei 16) The visual emotions of vertical lines are not separate from the concept of the poem and Taoism because the natural extension of loneliness is self-meditation, which is one of the Tao behaviors.

The mountain in the painting was painted in a vertical layout. The structural line segments on the mountain painting will thus be in same vertical direction. Therefore, vertical line repetition will not visually contrast with structural lines since they go in the same direction. As a result, the reductive form created by vertical lines will become subtler in representing the painting (Fig 41).

Based on this reductive form, a similar approach from Study Two is applied in Study Three. With a similar method of simplification, the final reductive form is developed based on four components. Figure 42 illustrates the reductive form in four components.

In figure 42, component one mainly includes far mountain. Component two includes medium distance and basically functions as a visual connection. Component three is the main body of the mountain. It contains large negative space and much heavier than rest of areas.

Components four is basically for ending purposes. It includes mountain in close view but tends to fade at the end.

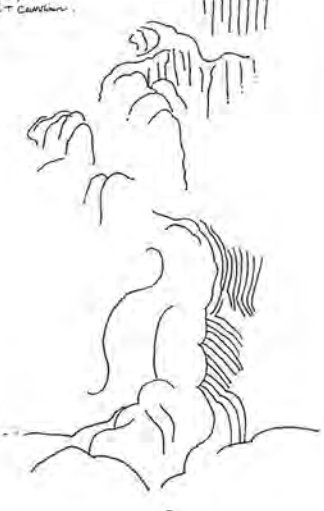





<p>① organic shapes Vertical + Curvature</p> 		<p>③ more (few) Tight (close)</p> 
<p>1 initial form based on the painting. Mostly composed by line segments in a vertical direction.</p>	<p>2 based on the negative area or the shape of mountain, placing horizontal lines.</p>	<p>3 continuing to test the contrast between short vertical lines and long vertical lines to reinforce spatial depth, thus adding more visual texture.</p>
<p>④ Connecting some short lines, and become longer and unified - retain strong, kinetic</p> 	<p>⑤ refine ④</p> 	<p>⑥</p> 
<p>4 continuing to adjust between lines on the top section to achieve great unity.</p>	<p>5 further simplifying the mountain with vertical lines. Seeking a balance point of being unified without losing visual details of the mountain structure.</p>	<p>6 final reductive form, well connected with a visual variety.</p>

Figure 41 Reductive Form Developed from the Selected Painting with Horizontal Lines

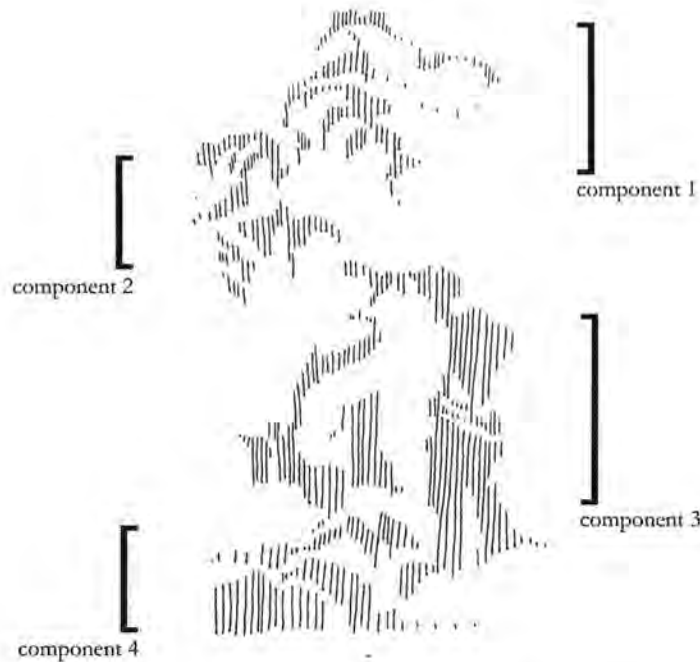


Figure 42, Final Reductive Form for Vertical Lines

In a similar manner to that used in Study Two, the first step in Study Three is to place text on components of the reductive form. The type size in component one is strictly 8 points and 10 points for component two and 14 points for component 3. This initial type treatment will not only form a sequential relationship between each successive component, but also will create a visual depth for the poster. Figure 43 shows the type placement on each component.

Because text is placed vertically, the poem is still readable. The reading hierarchy should basically follow from left to right to conform to modern reading ergonomics, but parts of the poem's text have been placed and adjusted to meet visual design requirements.



the water gross  
 to ask and  
 woodman  
 clouds  
 and gaze  
 Azure  
 as enter  
 and look  
 at the  
 whole expanse  
 shifts  
 at the  
 cap and peak  
 Shadow and light  
 in every valley  
 Withing  
 Indling  
 Yes  
 man  
 Tully  
 near  
 the  
 celestial  
 capital  
 continuous  
 mountains  
 arrive  
 at  
 the  
 edge of  
 the sea  
 Azure  
 miss  
 as enter  
 and  
 look  
 among  
 men  
 across  
 the water  
 deck  
 old  
 woodman  
 in every  
 valley  
 Whining  
 looking  
 lodging  
 Tully  
 nears  
 the  
 capital  
 capital  
 continuous  
 mountains  
 arrive  
 at the  
 edge  
 of the  
 White  
 clouds  
 asylum  
 and  
 gaze  
 3

Figure 44, Continuing Text Placements on Component Two. (Vertical lines)





[illegible]

Figure 46, Continuing Text Placements on Component Four. (Vertical lines)

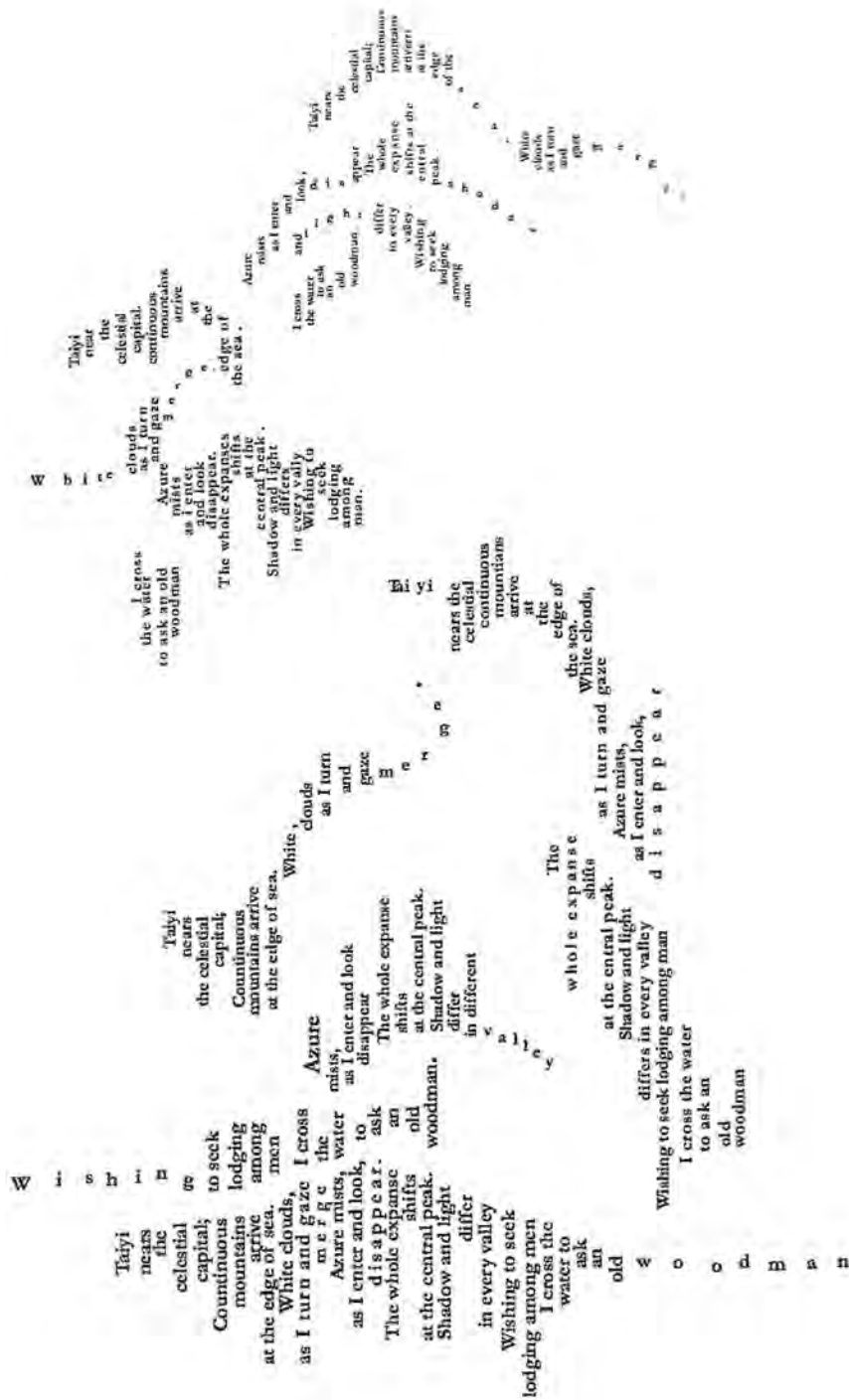


Figure 47, The Final Design (Vertical Lines)

Dot, as one of the design elements, in this study is to add spontaneous quality for the poster. It serves two functions. One is to create a visual connection; another is to add rhythm and spontaneity by being placed randomly. For example, the letters of “Woodman” on the poster has been placed very loosely and randomly to delivery the sense of spontaneity.

#### **D. Study Four: Texture**

The fourth reductive form as an underlying structure focuses on texture. Texture in this case is a very flexible design principle to mirror the organic form of the mountain and to reflect the Tao play of “being spontaneous.” Also, by adding more than one text layer over the reductive form, a much richer and poetic visual effect is created.

Through text overlay, spontaneity often occurs since the reductive form does not control text placement precisely as other reductive forms. However, spontaneity is important to reflect Taoism since spontaneity is a common interpretation of Taoism. A.C. Graham states the spontaneity in Taoism:

Shall we say then that in discarding all traditional imperatives Chuang-Tzu has substituted a new one for his own ‘Be spontaneous’? That has long been a common interpretation of Taoism (191).

As one of the important Tao concepts, spontaneity has also been pursued and imbedded in Chinese landscape paintings. Wang Wei sought spontaneity in the painting process. It has been recognized that the “broken ink” is the technique Wang Wei invented to convey spontaneity in his paintings. Michael Sullivan once described Wang Wei’s Painting by

stating, "...there was a special kind of landscape painting-free, relaxed, spontaneous, calligraphic, using "broken" ink on paper rather than fine line and color on silk-that was appropriate for a scholar and a gentleman" (Sullivan 48).

Since spontaneity plays so important a role in the Chinese painting process, it is a useful experiment in placing the text in a spontaneous manner during the process of the Study Three.







		
1 initial sketch layout based on the painting.	2 rough overall layout based on the painting.	3 Emphasis on connections between mountain components.
		
4 adding more details	5 emphasize on different part of structure of mountain.	6 adding more layers of text to reinforce the visual.

Figure 48, Reductive Form Developments in Text Overlay

Thus, the final texture based reductive form is produced. Like the previous method, the final reductive form is also grouped into four components as showed on figure 48. However, based on this reductive form, there are two different possible poster designs. One approach is to apply a text overlay to create a texture rich with spontaneity. Another is to apply shape association as a main design principle to create a single layer of texture.

In Taoism, we also see shape association. The relation between shape association and Taoism will be explained later.

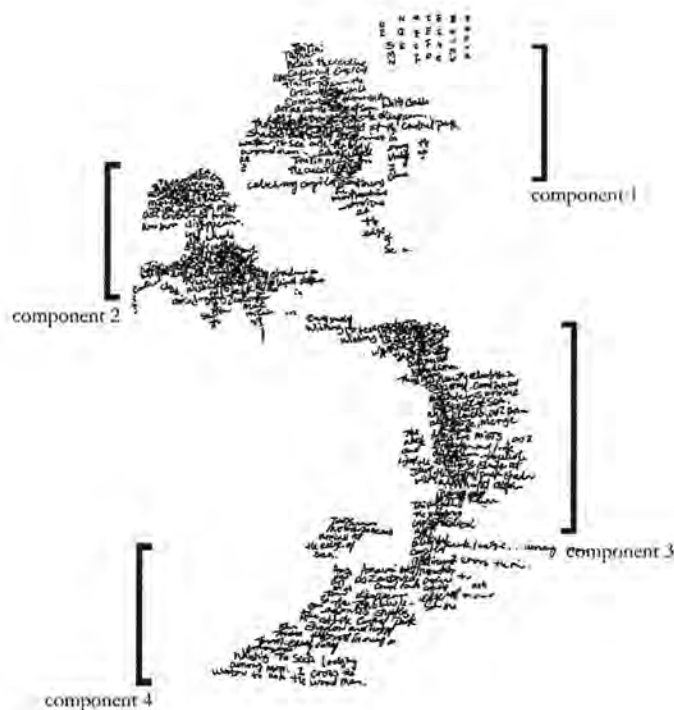


Figure 49, The Final Reductive Form for Text Overlay and Shape Association

**Design 1: Text Overlay**

Design-1 applies text overlay. Overlaying the text can produce a rich, loose, and organic typographic design in a spontaneous manner, and so design-1 is designed more with intuition and direct feeling rather than a logical analysis. According to feeling or visual intuition, the text from the poem is placed one layer at a time, to maximally imitate the mountain texture and the spontaneous quality of the painting. Figure 48 shows the initial text placements.



Figure 50, Text Placement on Texture Based on Reductive Form (Design 1)  
Initial Placement of Text Based on Overall Feeling





Figure 51, Adding More Layers to Make Visually Rich.

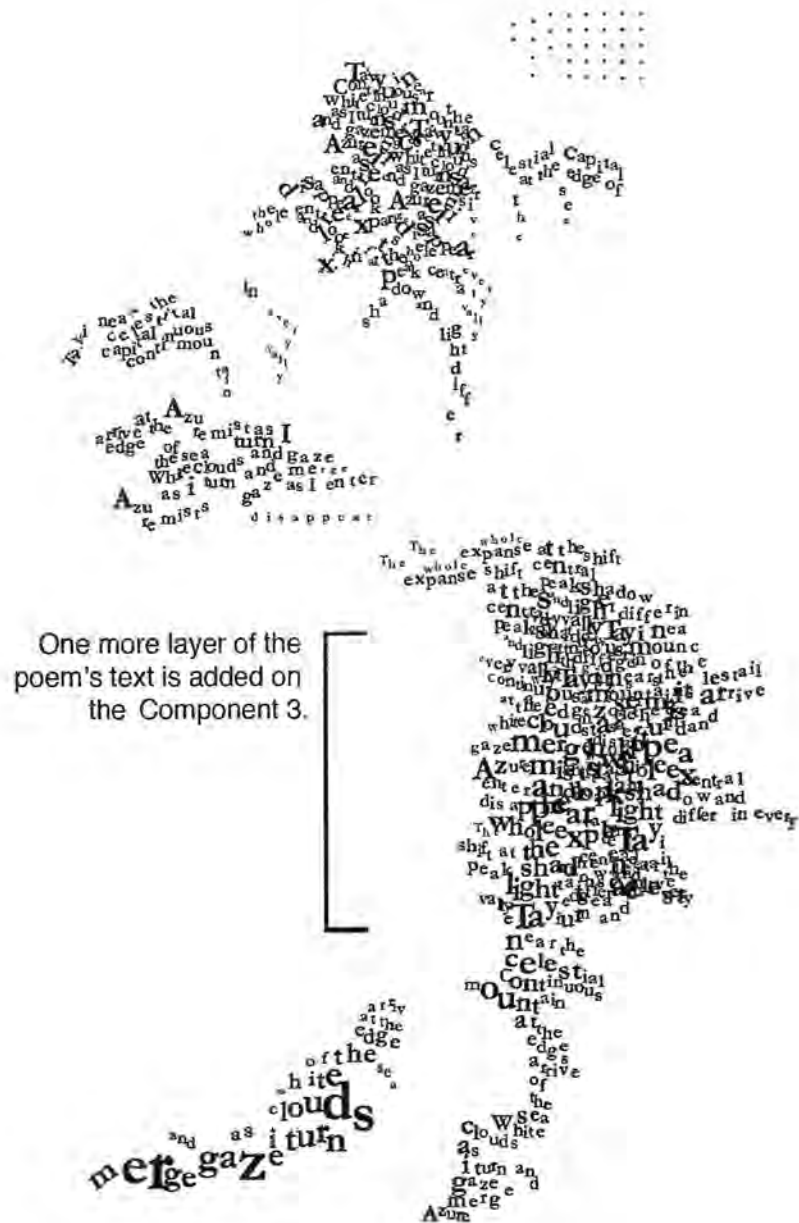


Figure 52, One More Layer of the Poem's Text Added on the Component Three



Figure 53, The Final Design (Text Overlay)

## Design 2: Shape Association

Project B will focus on shape association as the main design principle to create a textured look for the design. Shape association is a very common principle in graphic design. It can be related to the Yin and Yang principle in Taoism. Yin and Yang, means a perfect match to each other in term of shape. Once Yin and Yang are associated in shape, they form a perfect circle as shown in the image below, which is a basic form of unity. When the Yin and Yang concept in Taoism is extended to graphic design, shape association will be the nearest corresponding design principle to use.



Figure 54, Yang and Yin in Shape Association

In Design B, I changed the font typeface from Garamond to Helvetica, a san serif font.

Because this study focuses on shape association, Helvetica font obviously is the best fit based on its characteristics I explained in type selection section. (See p. 59)





Figure 56, Adding the Text on the Component Two.

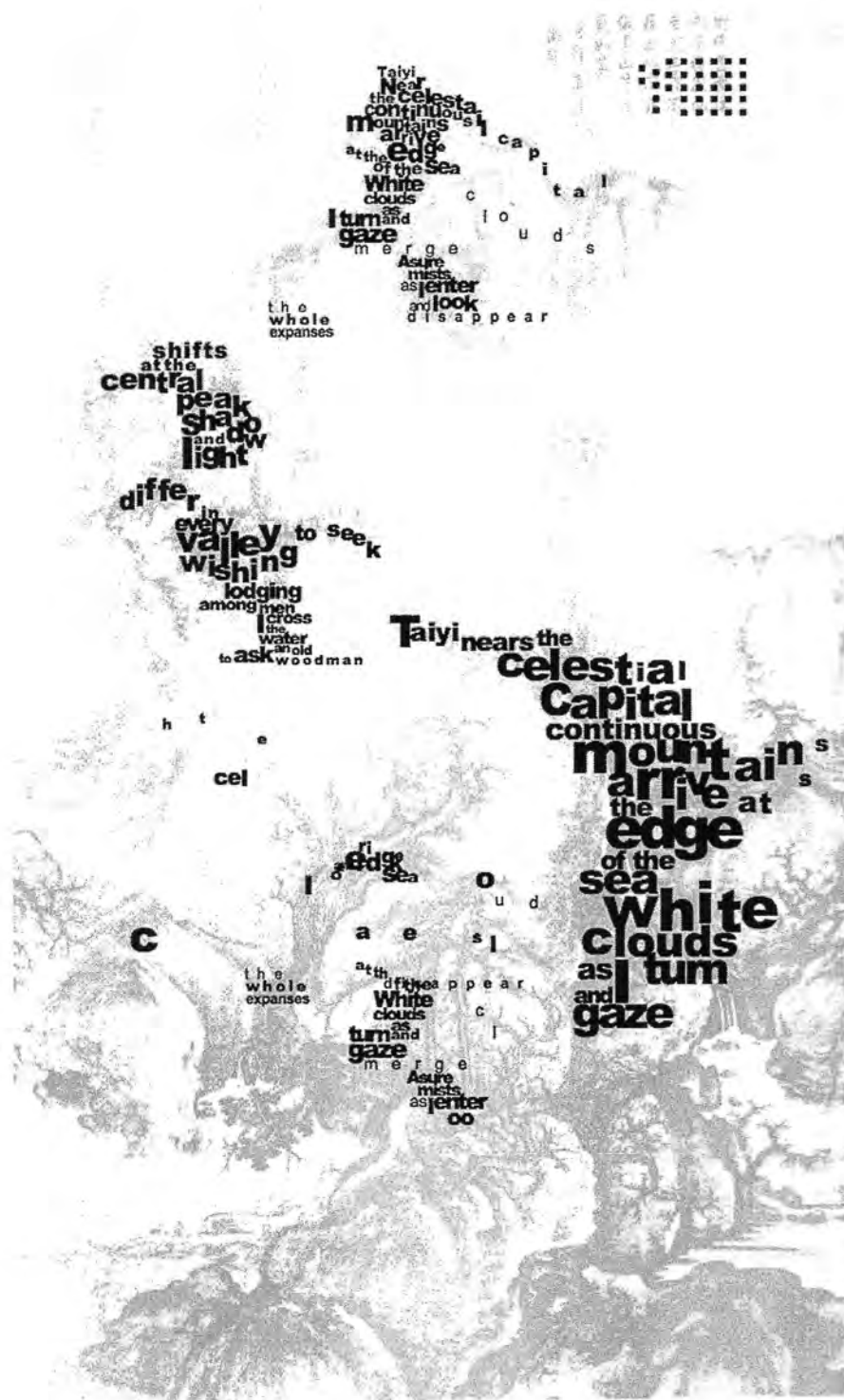


Figure 57, Spreading Out the Text on the Component Three







Figure 59, The Final Design (Shape Association).

Technically, the type size or weight stays very similar in Component One. Similar type attributes will not cause unnecessary attention in Component One that should be optically distant. Component Two, as a transition, is treated in a similar way as Component One. Component Three is a major part of the mountain. It contains more visual variety in type size, weight, and tracking as well as leading. Like a puzzle game, form and counter-form of each type are carefully studied and adjusted to match each other individually in terms of shape association.

#### **E. Study Five: “Ku Fa” (Bone Structure)**

In Chinese landscape painting, “Gu Fa” means “bone structure.” In the painting “Early Spring,” it is the way that the Chinese painter chose to reveal mountain structure through brush strokes or wrinkles, instead of representing the object plasticity through such physical attributes such as color, texture, shadow and lights as Western painters usually have done. According to Rowley, Gu Fa is related to brush wrinkles that capture the inner structure of an object like a mountain or rock. As Rowley states

Observe how the spirit of the mountain lives in its silhouette and how this rhythm is repeated in wrinkles throughout the structure. Even the shaded parts are rendered by a multiplicity of wrinkles, which lend structural character to the dark passages... To our eyes a Chinese form often seems reduced to a kind of ideographic skeleton. (37)

The “ideographic skeleton” that is revealed by brush strokes or wrinkles is the key to developing the reductive form in this study. The sketches in the next table illustrate the process used to capture the “ideographic skeleton.” The first step is to reduce the form of

the selected painting. This step is completed by deleting details of the painting through scanning. After scanning, the main mountain structure without complicated details is revealed. Along with the main structure of the mountain, curve lines are organized to discover its inner ‘ideographic skeleton.’ The figure shows the process of developing the ideographic skeleton form.

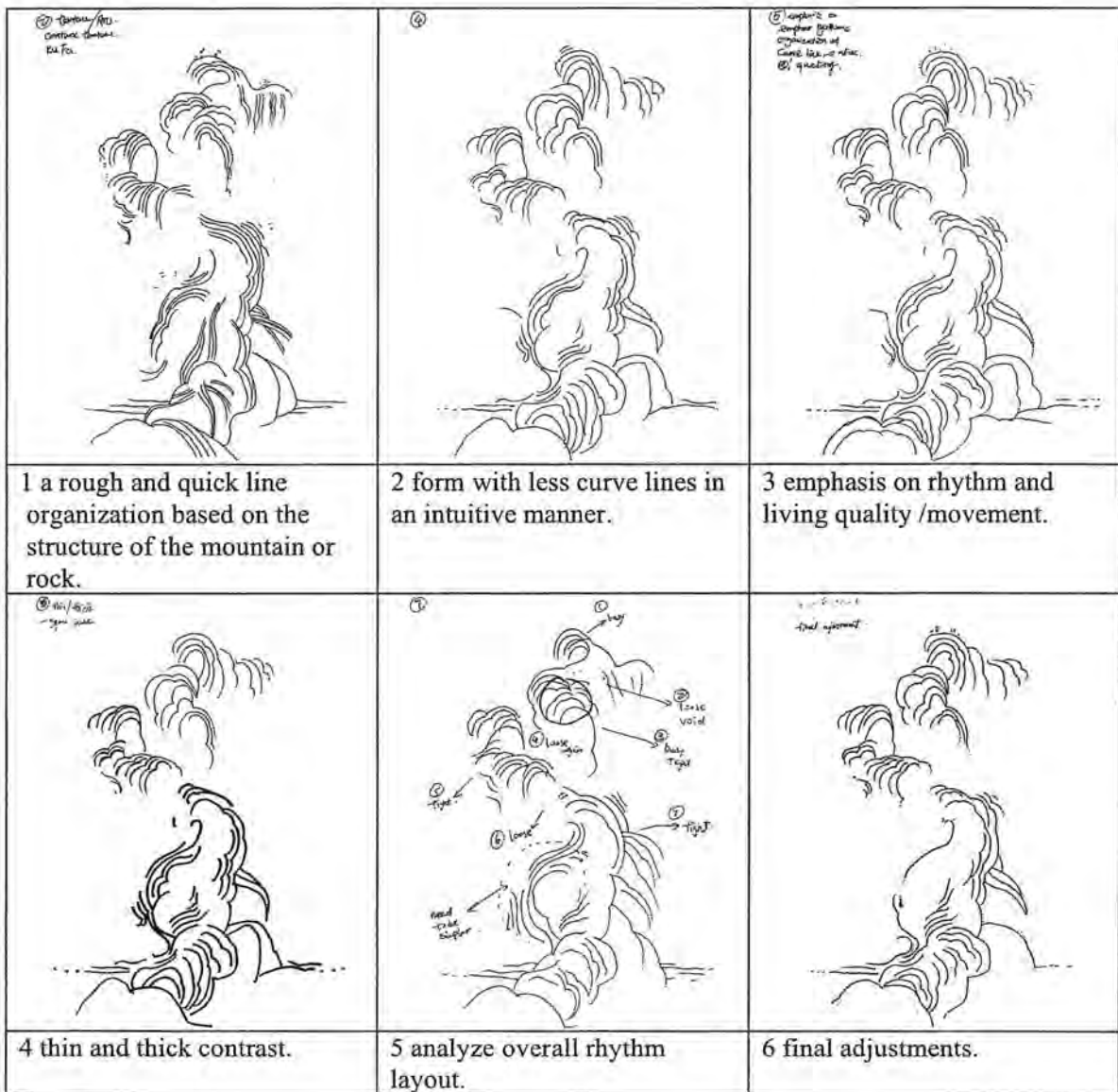


Figure 60, Reductive Form Refinement in Sequence (Bone-structure)

The final sketch has the quality of the “ideographic skeleton” in a reduced form. The curved lines placed on the grid not only represent a simplified visual structure of the mountain, but they also indicate the shadow area, which is what Rowley called the “dark passage.”(37)

Design principles such as contrast between tight and loose, open and close, and optical connections have been applied throughout the form development process.

Figure 61 is the initial placement of text using 12 point type size for creating visual depth. The combination of text and reduced form at this stage displays a type exercise potential for the next step. The design principles and “ideographic skeleton” carried by the reductive form seems to properly stand out. With small type arranged in a curved still linear way, the direction of the mountain’s tendency is well maintained with the guidance of the reductive form as a underlying structure.

Figure 62 is a continued text placement in Component Two. In this stage, the type size stays the same as in Component Two because, in this study, emphasis is placed on the “ideographic skeleton”. This “ideographic skeleton” relies more on line organization rather than graphic attributes of the lines themselves, so line placement is more important than line qualities such as size and weight. Even on the shadow of the mountain, the desired effect is achieved by placements of lines in small areas, instead of using thick lines or large size type.





Figure 63 shows the text placement in Component One, Two and Three. At this stage, the text stays basically in the same size. Text placement follows the reductive form but focus has been moved to deal with the dialogue between the mountain and its surrounding negative space, which is the dialogue between Yang (mountain) and Yin (surrounding negative space). In order to interact with negative space, the rhythm—open and closed, has been integrated into the design. For the text lines on the Component Three, lines are broken on the left and right side to allow negative space to flow in. The top and bottom on Component Three are closed to form visual balance.

Figure 64 is the completed text placement. Complex placements of text lines (lines on which text is placed on), guided by the reductive form, reflect not only the structure of the rock or mountain, but also imply the shadow passages. Text lines guided by the reductive form have now achieved a clear visual similarity of the mountain of the selected landscape painting. Similar type sizes create visual unity to the work.



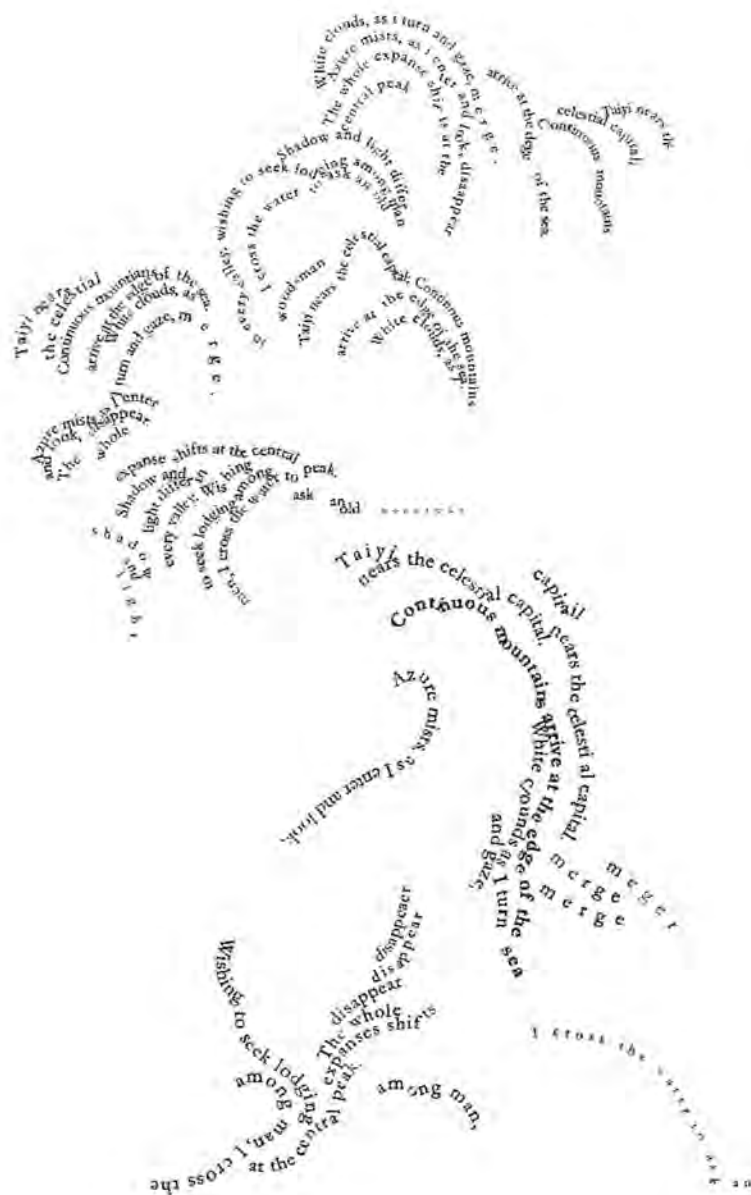


Figure 63, Text Placements on Component Three (“Ku Fa”)



Figure 64, The Final Design (“Ku Fa”)

## F. Study Six: Yin-Yang

Study Six is a project that is a work in progress. It is a project inviting letterforms to play with the Tao concept of Yin and Yang or in other words, negative and positive space.

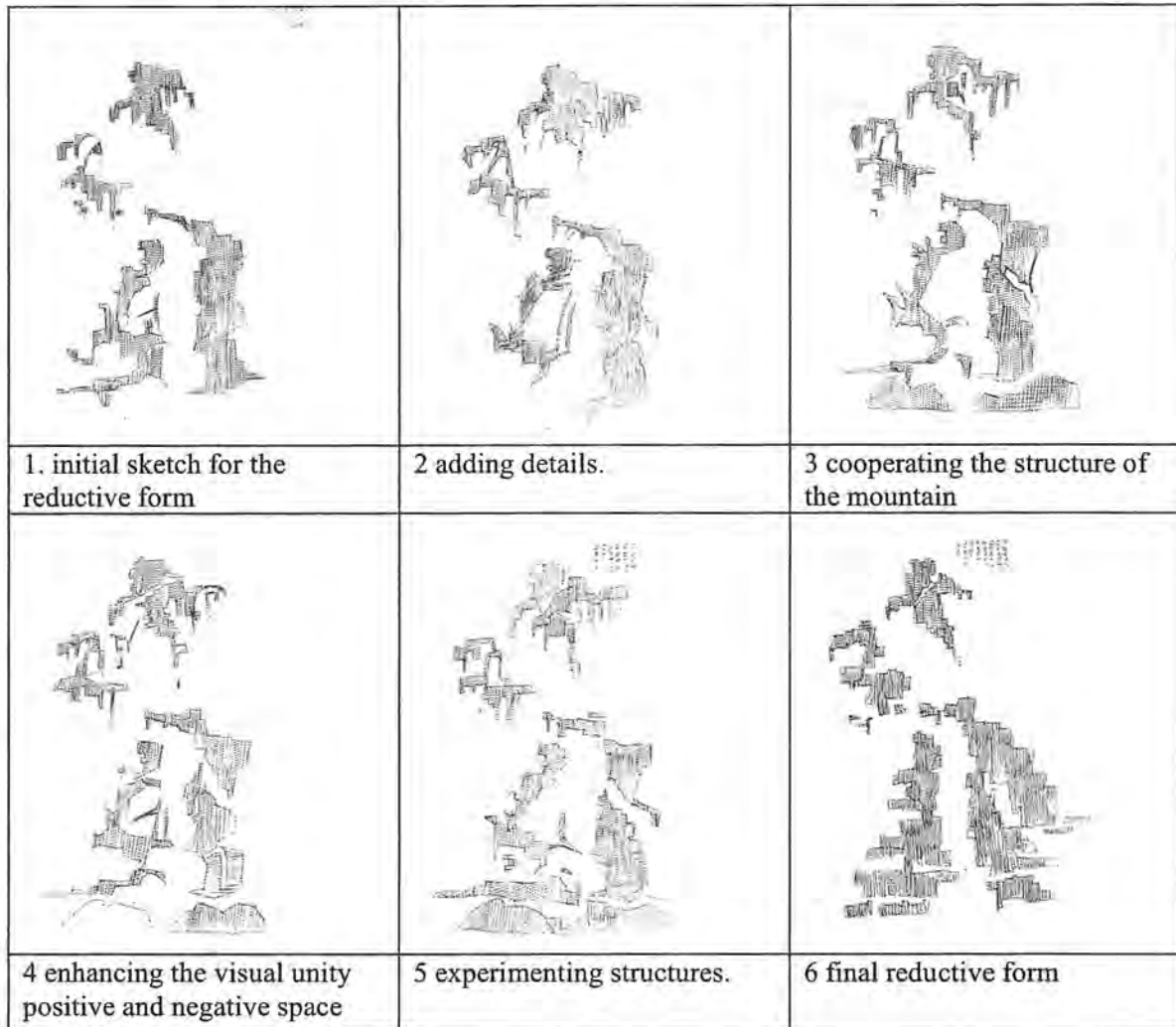


Figure 65, Sketches of Developing Reductive Form for Study Six

Previous studies focused on the transferable beauty between the painting, reductive form, and the poem. Typographic forms have been applied as a massive text body placed on the underlying structure, which is the reductive form developed from the painting. Now, Study Six focuses on how letterforms can correspond to the Tao concept.



Figure 66, Part of Design (Yin-Yang)

Figure 66 presents a part of this “work in progress.” Instead of being simply placed on the reductive form, letterforms are placed roughly according to the silhouette of the mountain in the painting. Also, letterforms have been outlined first to create enclosed space within each. The closed space and outside open space create Yang and Yin or positive and negative relationships. By open the closed space, a dialogue between the letterform and surrounding space occurs. Closed space and outside space then form a visual interflow that will integrate the letterforms and outside open space to become a single whole. Yin and Yang becoming a whole is one of the most important Tao concepts. Correspondingly, the interfusion between the closed space (outlined letterform), which is considered as positive space and the surrounding space around the outlined letterforms that is considered negative space, create an interesting visual interflow and visual harmony. Figure 67 shows the experimental study of letterform in the Tao principle of Yin and Yang.



Figure 67, Experimental Study of Letterform in the Tao Principle of Yin-Yang

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

This thesis has been written to establish a visual dialogue between Western culture and Chinese culture. In particular, it explores typography to effectively address communication problems existing in translations of landscape poems from Chinese to English.

This thesis has investigated relationships between landscape painting and poetry in the context of history, society and philosophy-Taoism. The Tao concepts “Wu Wei (no behavior) and “Tian Ren He Yi” (interfusion of nature and human), are carefully analyzed.

Furthermore, in the section of Tao creativity in Chinese landscape poetry and painting, Taoism has been logically proven as an essential creative concept connecting Chinese landscape painting and poetry through creative activities. It was proven that Taoism indeed deeply affected both Chinese landscape poems and painting. This analysis is a cornerstone that supports the proposed solution of combining Chinese landscape poetry and painting to preserve and restore the Tao beauty lost during language translation.

During the development of reductive forms based on the selected painting used as underlying structure for the poem’s text placement, the reductive form of the mountain was carefully studied in order to transfer the Taoism embedded in the painting into the reductive form. All design elements used in the poster design were carefully selected to correspond with Tao concepts. For example, during Study Two, horizontal lines were used because they embody the visual qualities of quietness, peace, and tranquility, which are also qualities of nature and are the core of Taoism. Through such studies, from the sketches to the final designs, Taoism

is the only factor that underpins the landscape poem, the reductive form as an underlying structure, and the painting. As a result, the final typographic design produced by placing the poem's text on the reductive forms would convey the Tao beauty shared between the Chinese landscape poem and painting.

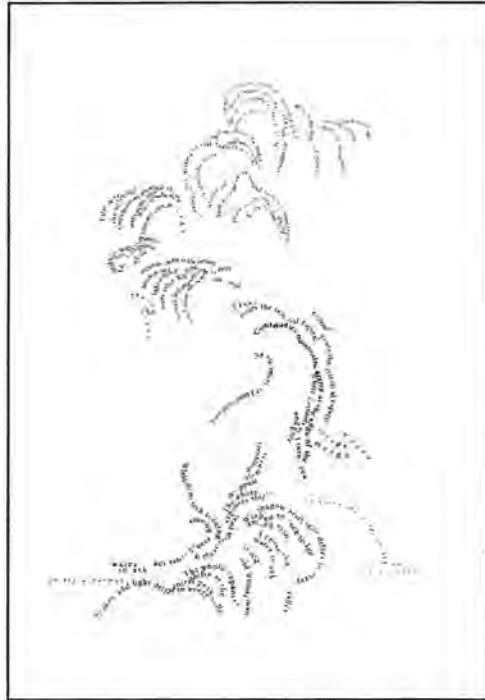
Among the completed design studies, Study Two and Study Five were more successful than the others. These Two studies create unique reductive forms from the mountain painting and each successfully capture the spirit of Taoism embedded in the painting. In another words, both reductive forms effectively transfer Tao aesthetic concepts from the painting and integrated into themselves. Study Two uses a horizontal line structure that naturally reflected the Tao concept of peace and tranquility. Even though the reductive form lacks the organic quality of the mountain to mirror the actual landscape of the painting, the beauty of Tao is well preserved. At the same time, the finished typographic design contains the same visual quality of silence and peace. The poster design in Study Five carries more Tao beauty from the poem, including such elements as empty space, intangible environment, and nature. It uses curvilinear lines to trace the mountain structure, also called "ideographic skeleton," from the painting. This allows the reductive form to become similar to the "ideographic skeleton" in which the Tao concepts are embedded. Therefore, Tao concepts in the painting are well transferred into the reductive form.

### **1. Future Experiments**

The study in this thesis only focused on form, type, and design principles in two-dimensional space. There are a number of other possibilities available for further experiments.



Study Two



Study Five

Figure 68, The Final Designs of Study Two and Study Five

Use of color is one of the possible experimental elements with which to enhance the typographic design. In the present study, only black and white images have been addressed. Color can be used as a powerful design element with which to manipulate illusory space, to modify the visual weight of type, to create visual balance, and to adjust contrast between type and background for better legibility. It also can enhance the visual experience by imitating the color of the original painting to engender a desire for appreciating the original culture and related history.

Another possible future experimental study is to explore different print materials. By avoiding the use of electronic printing, some special print media and paper might deliver



more information with respect to cultural aspects and enhance the appreciation of the final typographic work. For example, a woodblock print maintains more Chinese cultural and literature-oriented aspects than an electronic print. The beauty carried in such craft would contribute to the typographic work subtly; a rice paper print, for example, may provide more information beyond that delivered by the poem and typographic design only.

This thesis contains research using typographic design to preserve the original content and character of poetry lost in language translation. It is an experimental study that explores a possible visual solution for breaking down barriers between different cultures regarding history and language. With ever-increasing global cooperation in commercial activities, a graphic design solution that contributes to enhancement of dialogue between different cultures will become increasingly needed.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- An-Zi, Zhang. A History of Chinese Painting. Trans. Dun J. Li. Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1992.
- Bann, Stephen. Concrete Poetry: An International Anthology. London: Shenval Press, 1967.
- Barnstone, Tony, Willis Barnstone, and Xu Hai-Xin. Laughing Lost in Mountains: Poems of Wang Wei. 1991.
- Bevington, William and James Crag. Designing with Type. New York: Watson-Guitt Publications, 1999.
- Bynner, Witter. from the texts of Kiang Kang-Hu, The Jade Mountain. New York: Alfred A Knopf, Inc., 1929.
- Calvin, Lewis and Dorothy B. Walmsley. Wang Wei the Painter-Poet. Japan: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1968.
- Chung-Yuan, Chang. Creativity and Taoism. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1970.
- Dair, Carl. Design with Type. Hanover: University of Press of New England, 1967.
- Fang, Zheng. "An Essay of the Art between Chinese Mountain Water Painting and Western Landscape Painting." Fine Art Megazine. Vol. 460, p112.
- Ferguson, John C. Chinese Painting. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1927.
- Graham, AC. Disputers of the Tao. Illinois: Open Court Publishing, 1989.
- Hinton, David. Mountain Home. New York: Counterpoint, 2002.
- Hoffmann, Armin. Graphic Design Manual. Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1965.
- Li, Chen-Yang. The Tao Encounters the West. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999.

- Meggs, Philip B. A History of Graphic Design. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1983.
- Miyagawa, Torao. Chinese Painting. Trans. Alfred Birnbaum. New York: John Weatherhill, Inc., 1983.
- Rowley, George. Principles of Chinese Painting. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1947.
- Selected Poems Apollinaire. Trans. Oliver Bernard. London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1965.
- Shou-Yi, Ch'en. Chinese Literature – A Historical Introduction. New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1961
- Solt, Mary Ellen. Concrete Poetry: A World View. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970.
- Stout, Jane Ann. Design, Exploring Elements and Principles. March 2000  
<<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/4H634.pdf>>
- Sullivan, Michael. Symbol of Eternity-The Art of Landscape Painting in China. California: Stanford University Press, 1979.
- Te-Tao Ching. Trans. Robert G. Hendricks. Great Britain: Macmillan Publishing Co. 1990.
- Watts, Alan. TAO: The Watercourse Way. New York: Pantheon Books, 1975.
- Wong, Wucius. Principles of Form and Design. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1993.
- Wu, John C. The Four Seasons of Tang Dynasty. Japan: Charles E. Tuttle Co, 1972.
- Yin-Kai, Lei. Graphic Design Basic. China: Liao Ning Fine Art Press, 1989.
- Yip, Wai-lim. Chinese Poetry. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976.
- Yu, Pauline. The Poetry of WANG WEI. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980.